



# **Auburn is a Dancing Lady**

**A Guidebook By  
Rachel S. Roberts**

**Photography  
by  
ROBERT SBARGE**

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A Guidebook  
by  
Rachel Sherwood Roberts

Photography  
by  
ROBERT SBARGE

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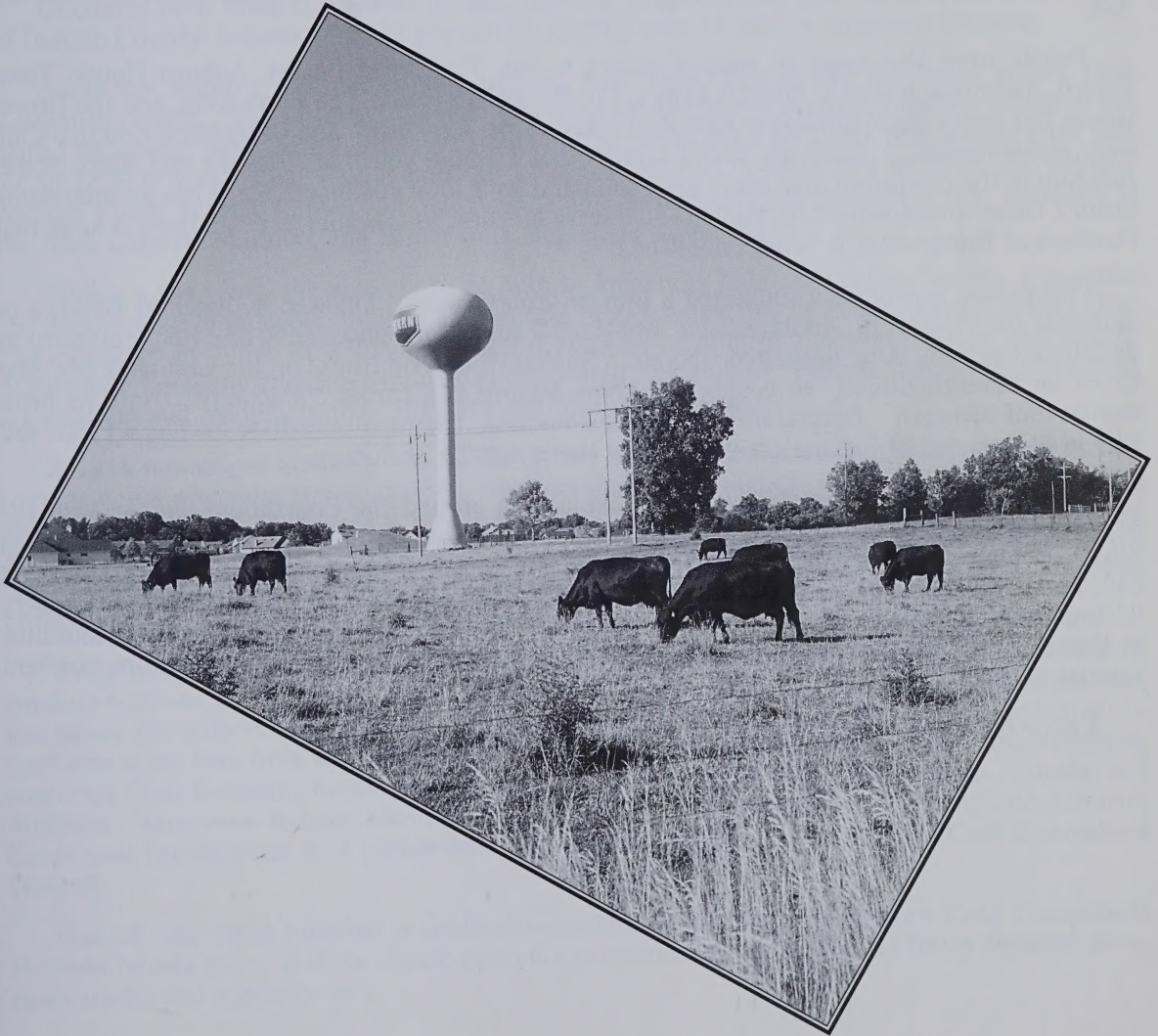


Crossing a bridge over the Interstate, he was in the country with trees and grass and cows, their calves at their side. There were frame houses here and there under giant oaks. But even here, at the edges of solid fields and pastures, street signs had been planted, signaling the direction in which the town...was moving.

-Lawrence Dorr  
in "An Early Christmas"

## *Introduction*

**W**hen I decided to put together a guidebook about Auburn, I asked children, teenagers, and adults what events or attractions of historic or artistic value they thought visitors should see or experience in order to enjoy or understand this small city. From many suggestions, I selected eighteen that I consider treasures.





Some people listed antique malls, specialty shops, and boutiques as places to see or browse, often mentioning the Sixth Street Emporium, the Studio Gallery, Waanders' Bookmark, Pecker's Loft, and Heavenly Treasures. But there are other stores that are delightful and I hate to omit any. Visit Nugen's for fine furniture, arrange to see furnishings and mattress-making operations at Corunna Bedding; stop in at historic TenEyck's or the Sprinkling Can to enjoy creatively designed floral gifts; check Steinman Art Gallery to see the works of local artists; visit adjacent gift shops, or spend time at City Hardware, an absolute treasure and definite "must see." Don't miss our jewelry stores and downtown boutiques and allow time to browse in antique and craft shops. Not every shop is on the downtown square; like restaurants, they also change hands or locations. Ask.

People were also eager to suggest places to eat. The Bread Basket, Auburn House, Town Tavern, Ambrosia, Joshua's, Poncho Kelly's, the Mongolian House, the Pizza King, and the Brown House (for coney dogs) got votes. Fast food restaurants, franchises, and Greenhurst Country Club were recommended. I didn't ask about taverns, but I assure you that Cricket's and Ninth Street Junction in the downtown area serve good food and have loyal customers. Each has an interesting history. Other downtown establishments also serve lunches. As this goes to print, there is news that Hartley's at Bridgewater is being established.

One person humorously suggested a tour of grocery stores, followed by lunch at Wendy's or dinner at the Pizza Hut. Another listed Wal-Mart, a superstore since 1998, and Roc (putt-putt) as definite attractions. One suggested Operation Shelter (the Gerig House on the west bank of Cedar Creek on Seventh Street) "so people will know Auburn is a caring community." [Note its ornamental roof corners.] Several mentioned the churches. I wanted to include Sechler's Pickle factory in St. Joe, one of Indiana's treasures, but that's outside of Auburn.

Invite a friend to accompany you and take a turn around the Courthouse square. Visit the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum and the National Automotive and Truck Museum of the United States. Enjoy our taverns, motels, bed-and-breakfasts, and restaurants. Better yet, spend several days in northeast Indiana. A few nearby favorite eating places are St. James in Avilla, the Hatchery in Angola, Klug's Tavern and the Railroad Inn in Garrett, and various Hamilton Lake restaurants. In Grabill, Leo, Harlan, and Butler, local cafes serve good food, and of course, there are excellent eateries in Fort Wayne.

I hope this guidebook will help you enjoy your visit.



## I. Beguiled By Small Treasures



**W**elcome to Auburn! Whether it's art or architecture, shopping or sightseeing, if you allow yourself to be beguiled by small treasures, Auburn will delight you.

Of course each town in America named "Auburn" is special, but this Auburn, the county seat of DeKalb County, Indiana, with its population slightly over 10,000, is unique—a treasure.

Some say Auburn was named for Auburn, New York. Others say the name comes from Goldsmith's poem, "The Deserted Village," where he wrote, "Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain." Whatever the case, the little settlement on the banks of Cedar Creek that Wesley Park platented in 1836 is now a small city. A post office was established in 1839, and in 1849, the unincorporated village became a town. On March 26, 1900, Auburn officially became a city although at the time, Garrett, Waterloo, and Butler were larger and busier places.

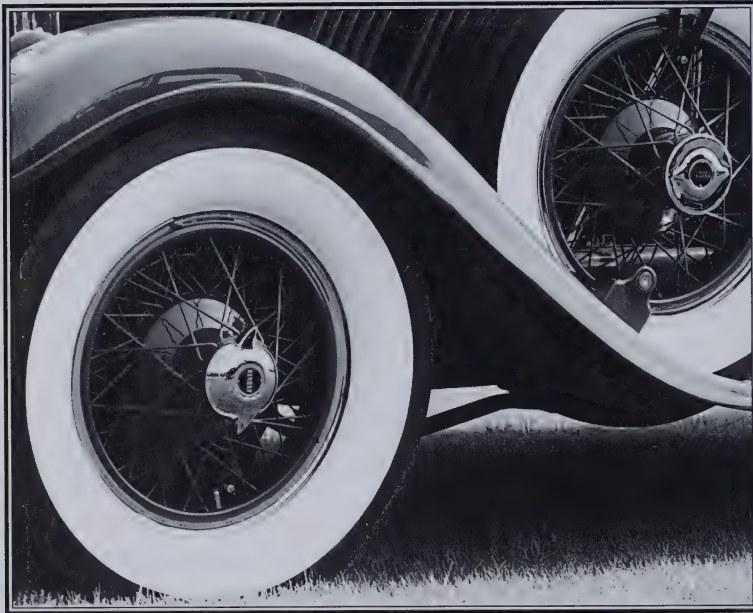
Within a few years, the area south of Auburn known as Auburn Junction became a commercial hub because of its depot, interurban line, and three intersecting railroads. [Read *Looking Over The Shoulder* by Floyd Link for a wonderful account of Auburn Junction.] Soon the Auburn Automobile Company and other industries discovered that Auburn, Indiana, was an ideal location for shipping and manufacturing. Industry and prosperity followed.

A 1914 newspaper quotes a Mrs. Little on the occasion of her 90th birthday, describing the town as it was when she arrived in 1864. "Auburn was a small village...with dogs and cows running around over town. There were a few wood walks, one being halfway around the Courthouse Square." The newspaper clipping did not give her full name, but she was probably related to the family who owned Little's Jewelry Store that later became Carbaugh Jewelers, now owned by Mike Littlejohn.

Today residents think nothing of traveling to New York, London, or Hong Kong to vacation or conduct business, but they love to return to Auburn where people are friendly, neighborhoods safe, and where life reflects a bygone era. And, Auburnites aren't at all surprised by the number of visitors who come here from far-flung places—tour groups from the Pacific Rim, choirs from Holland, engineers from Germany, Russia, and South America, and car collectors from Africa, Canada, and Australia. Many come to learn about the history of early automobiles or to see the classic Auburns, Cords, and Duesenbergs that parade here every Labor Day during the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival.

One of only eight hundred accredited museums in America, the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum houses many of those classic cars on a permanent basis. Nearby NATMUS Museum showcases trucks and specialty cars.

People from all over the world come to Auburn, and many find the town classy and pretty and sometimes a bit of a flirt. Part of the appeal is that Auburn doesn't pretend to be what she isn't. Once in a newspaper column, I described Auburn "as a dancing lady" all gussied up for its annual Labor Day Auburn Cord Duesenberg parade and festival. The director of the Chamber of Commerce at that time often included a copy of the column in promotional materials because she said it captured the spirit of the town. Let me put it this way:— AUBURN IS A DANCING LADY, BRIGHT WITH ENERGY AND ART, HER HISTORY TREASURED LIKE A CLASSIC CAR.



## II. Treasures of Auburn



### 1. The Courthouse

The building is modern Ionic Greek, faced with Indiana Bedford limestone quarried near Bloomington, Indiana. The shape is a parallelogram with a frontage of 140 feet on the east and west and a depth of 116 feet on the north and south.

The July 28, 1911, edition of the *Auburn Daily Courier* (the newspaper that predates the *Evening Star*) carried the following headline:

**Thousands of DeKalb Co. People Witness Ceremonies  
Attending the Laying of the Corner Stone of the  
Greatest Building Ever Constructed in County.**

An accompanying article covered the gala celebration and discussed the "stately building" designed by the Fort Wayne architectural firm of Mahurin & Mahurin with J.B. Goodall doing the construction. The cost for the building and the power plant that heated it was \$317,072.14.

The Courthouse IS a stately attraction.

The first floor is five steps above ground level and fourteen feet high. The interior columns, floors, and roof are reinforced concrete, and the interior partitions are constructed of gypsum blocks. The corridor floors are encaustic tile, the offices, marble and tile.

Vermont marble is used extensively in the interior, including the corridor wainscoting and the stairs. Italian workers were imported to do the marble and art work, and in spite of their "propensity for frequenting local taverns when not working, they were excellent craftsmen."

Interior columns, walls, and ceilings are decorated to resemble marble. Doors, casings, trim, counters, furniture, files, and shelving are made of steel, grained in such a way as to imitate oak wood. According to historian, John Martin Smith, the only wood is in the Circuit Courtroom.

The dome is capped with Florentine art glass illuminated by a skylight by day and sixty electric lights by night. In the Auditor's office and the Clerk's office are other large stained-glass windows. The exquisite dome and the stained-glass and clear-glass windows throughout the building, especially above the east stairwell, make the Courthouse an artistic treasure.

There are forty-six rooms in the building, not counting lobbies, corridors, and the rotunda. The Superior Court, on the south side of the third floor, is hard used, and old photographs and paint-





ings of Civil War soldiers hang on the walls. The Circuit Court is lavish with gold leaf and Florentine glass.

The assembly room on the first floor, south side, was recently remodeled to make room for a second superior court and offices for the prosecutor.

A memorial dedicated to the “Heroes Of DeKalb Co. Who Gave Their Lives In Defense Of Their Country” stands in the rotunda. The names inscribed honor those who lost their lives during World War I and World War II.

Paintings: In the stairwell between the second and third floors are two large murals executed by New York City artist C. Arthur Thomas, born in 1858 in Dresden, Germany. He also did the murals on both sides of the bench in the Circuit Courtroom. The murals represent “The Spirit of Progress” and “The Spirit of Industry.” Some years ago, Martha Pitzer, a deputy in the DeKalb County Auditor’s office, found the original claim for Thomas’s murals. In 1913, Thomas was paid \$500 for his work.

Visitors who take the time to look through the large window of the tiny room on the ground floor located by the west entrance, will see a master clock, made of brass, manufactured by Hahl Automatic Clock Company. In 1912, the clock cost \$2288. By means of air tubes, it controls twenty-two secondary clocks throughout the building. “An impulse of air is sent forth every alternate

minute and inflates the diaphragm of the secondary clocks. The opening of the valves in the master clock in alternate minutes releases the impulse and allows all air in the tubing system to equalize." Originally the exterior clocks were also operated in this manner, but now they are powered by electric motors. Behind the clock room in what is now the recorder's office is a one-room jail cell built to house defendants during trials. In the basement an underground tunnel links the courthouse with the old jail(now demolished) across the street.

The displays: On the second floor are several display cases where important and odd artifacts are exhibited— historic keepsakes such as old photos, a school bell dating back to 1879, and a book entitled *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana 1847*. Other relics are Indian arrowheads, grain grinders, rocks, and even a rattle from a rattlesnake. Spoons, a cornet from the first band in the county(1860), and a piece of the bedstead occupied by General Grant while he headquartered in Savannah, Tennessee, lie like dusty sentinels from the past, along with letters and old bullets from Spanish-American War battlefields. Even samples of gold and silver ore from New Mexico and Colorado are on display, and an 1815 *Farmer's Almanac* is placed next to a basket of chicken or turkey "wishbones." It's an odd exhibit but worth seeing.

Chandeliers, gorgeous brass and bronze lamps, and overhead lights and fixtures illuminate each floor—lamps on the marble staircases, sconces around the rotunda on the second floor, and tall pedestal lamps on the third-floor rotunda.

When refurbished along with the other sixty original light fixtures, the brass oak-leaf rings that surround the overhead lights were discovered to have been covered with gold paint. These light fixtures speak well of the officials who bought and installed them in 1914, and they continue to add a gleam to the interior of the Courthouse.

The open rotunda, huge columns, and decorated friezes give the building a sense of importance. The DeKalb County Commissioners maintain the Courthouse, and Clint Stephens, who appreciates art and beauty, is often commended for his exceptional care of the Courthouse building and grounds. In fact, sometimes people drive around the Courthouse Square simply to enjoy the flowers, and it has been noted that during the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival some visitors turn their backs on the parade of classic cars to admire the flowers.



## 2. Eckhart Public Library

Eckhart Public Library is a jewel—the building, resources, and the landscaped grounds that feature a beautiful cast iron fountain. Located on the block between South Jackson, Van Buren, and Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets, the library is a masterpiece of construction and an excellent example of Classic Chicago Prairie School architecture.

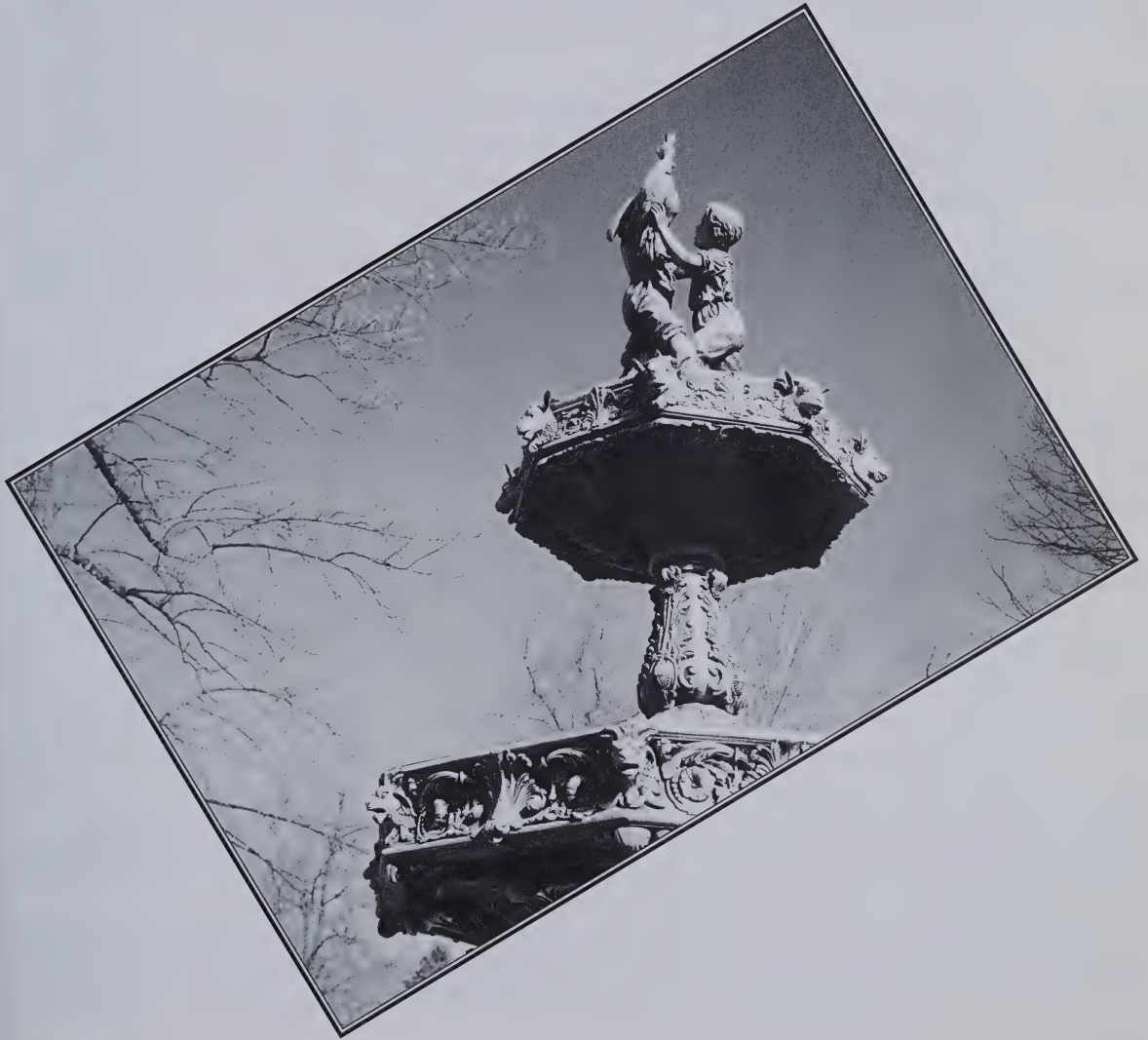
In 1910, philanthropist Charles Eckhart purchased land and donated money to establish a public library “not for any particular class or group but for every citizen of Auburn.” He instructed architects Patton & Miller “to spare no expense.” When the cornerstone was laid, residents celebrated not only Eckhart’s beneficence but also a building of outstanding design. Fortunately the library’s original splendor has been maintained.

Faced with Bedford limestone and salt-glazed brick, the library foundation is four feet wide. The roof is green tile with broad overhangs. The original entrance was marble and mosaic tile, the staircase, iron. The first-floor trim is quarter-sawed oak. Other details, including many stained-glass windows, and a community room make the building attractive. Its original cost was more than \$140,000.



By the 1970s and 1980s, however, the building was so crowded that renovation and expansion were imperative. A city-wide campaign generated wonderful local support. With a generous grant from the Willenar Foundation and several other donors, a large expansion designed by Morrison Kattman Menze was built. Dedicated with much fanfare in May of 1996, speeches and celebrity guests made the occasion memorable. The Auburn Community Band entertained the crowd from the new Niles Memorial Terrace.

The original cast iron fountain that Charles Eckhart purchased from the J.L. Mott Iron Works in 1912 stands on the library grounds.



Residents loved the fountain, but after many years, it fell into disrepair. Today you see it in all its original glory because again, thanks to community support, the Willenar Foundation, and many donations, it has been refurbished. Venus Bronze Works of Detroit completely disassembled some 150 cast-iron pieces before repairing and painting. Auburn celebrated the completion of the restoration project in the summer of 1997.

The ornate fountain stands nearly nineteen feet and is topped by a sculpture of two boys struggling for the possession of a goose. Water spouts from the top and cascades into the lower basins, providing a delightful and peaceful sound throughout the gardens.

The cast-iron lampposts with designs of swags and entwining vines measure fifteen feet. One globe crowns four suspended globes, and although they aren't exactly identical to the originals, they are close. The renovation of the lampposts was made possible by a memorial gift from Ron and Wilma Ball. Visitors also will admire the little art-deco lamps by the exit doors that complement the library's many art-deco windows.

The fountain area offers benches for relaxing and reading, and landscaping and streetlights surround the entire block and the library. The building, grounds, and lampposts reflect the Beaux Arts motif style of 1911, the year the library was dedicated.

Inside, visitors can enjoy the art work, the reading area around the fireplace, the Indiana and Genealogy Room, and the archive area where artifacts and records are stored. It was because of the efforts of various cultural and literary clubs that the library was started. The Ladies Literary Club of Auburn, organized in 1882, is the second oldest literary club in Indiana.

### THE ART COLLECTION:

Throughout the library hang art works of particular interest and appeal. In the little conference room by the front door, named the Graber Room, hangs a rare print of Tolstoy, donated by the Robert Sbarga family. It will take your breath away IF you study it carefully. (Get close and personal, read the accompanying article, and you will see what I mean.)

On the south wall hang two landscape paintings by former librarian, Ruth Mayfield, two oils by H.C. Davisson, a Fort Wayne artist who died in 1957 [at auction in 1998, two of his works brought \$3250], and a watercolor by Louis Bonsib, another Fort Wayne artist whose art also is now collectible. Over the entrance of the reference desk is a watercolor, painted by Andrea M. VanHorne, of one of the six stained-glass art-deco windows originally on the outside wall. Other stained-glass windows grace the building, including large arched art-deco stained-glass windows upstairs. Each glows with angular designs, primarily in amber and yellow.

On the first floor on the left side of the main entry is a large painting of a woman fashionably dressed in the style of the late 1800s. Former head librarian Sirleine Smith found the painting in the library attic. No one seems to know the woman's identity or anything about the painting, but

somehow it seems natural that “the belle in black,” with her beautiful and confident air, gazes serenely out over modern readers and shelves of books.

Another fine painting in the library was donated by Joan K. Butler. It is by Howard Ashleman, a commercial artist born in Auburn in 1902, a son of William J. Ashleman who was a cousin of Charles Eckhart. The portrait of Charles Eckhart by R.W. Grafton located over the fireplace in the reading area also merits scrutiny. If you look closely, you will see that Eckhart’s eyes follow you no matter where you stand or sit in relation to the painting.

“The Battle of Fair Oaks,” Virginia, May 31, 1862, a large painting commissioned by Charles Eckhart, hangs in the back stairwell. It is assumed, but not known, that Charles Eckhart participated in that battle.

Downstairs in the children’s department are several original oils donated to the library by the Messenger Company(an old Auburn company, with a fascinating history, famous for publishing religious calendars). Most of the paintings are of western scenes, complete with cowboys and wagons. Other art works grace the rooms, including fiber and quilted works by Zerkle and Stuckey. Displays, puppets, and storytelling props make the area engaging.

As people leave the library, they might wish to note the large rare European cut-leaf beach tree on the south side, a tree with its own history and reputation. (Note that the tree has grown up around the lamppost.)

### **3. The Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum**

The Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum building stands like a queen on South Wayne Street, a veritable treasure trove of classic cars, automotive literature, and special galleries representative of different periods in history, including the “mad era of champagne, caviar, and soup kitchens.”

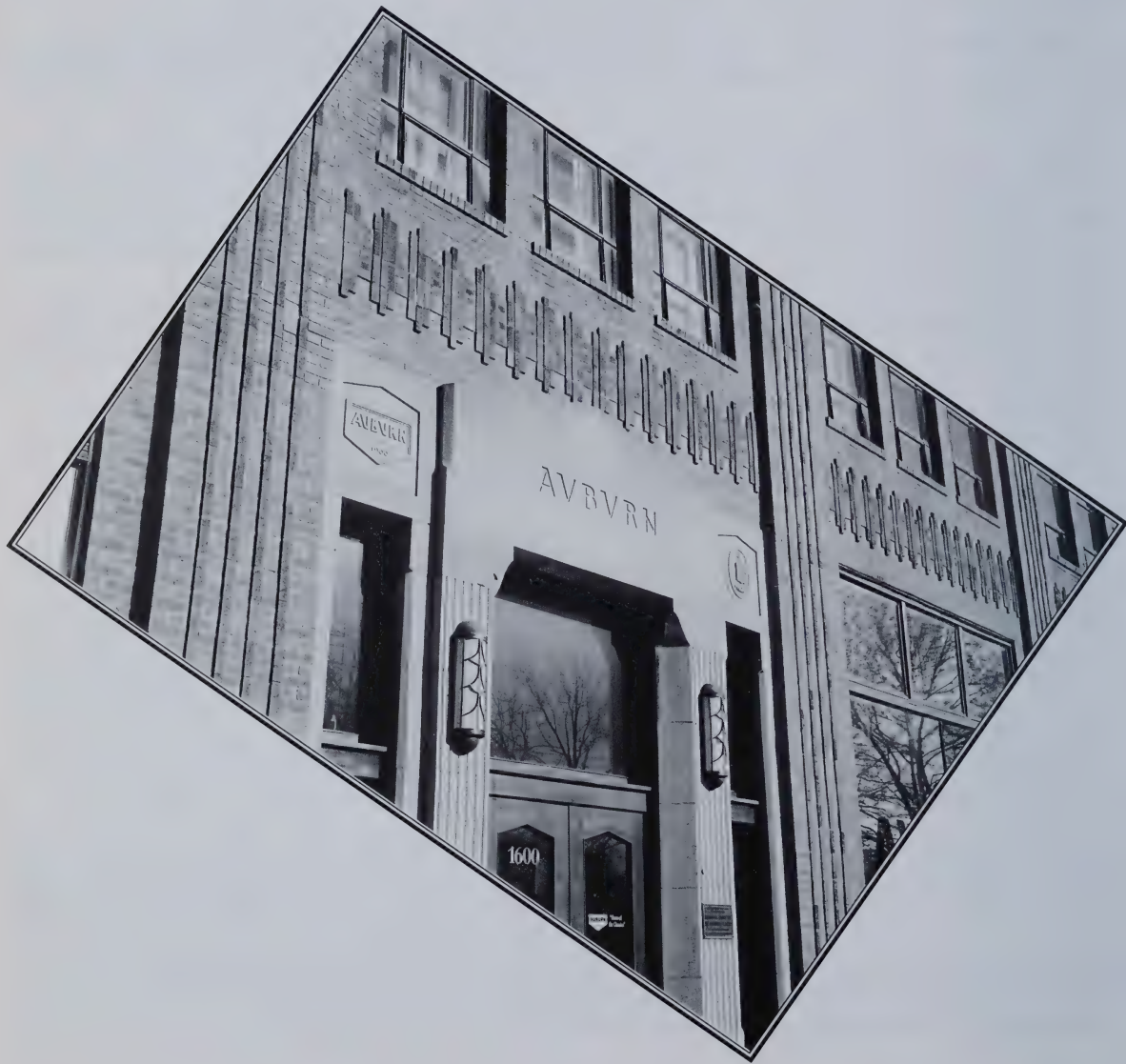
Constructed in 1930 to be the headquarters and showrooms for the Auburn Automobile Company, the building features 80,000 square feet of floor space and “artistic designs in pleasing hues in floors, walls, and ceilings.” Designed to be “a beautiful and harmonious setting for the product on display,” the museum is home to some one hundred classic cars on two floors and one of the finest examples of art deco in the United States according to museum publicity.

In 1995, the museum moved its main entrance from the west side to the north side of the building to take advantage of the large parking area. The new entryway, meticulously designed to resemble the art deco style of the 1930 building, was dedicated in 1998. Inside, visitors see masterpieces such as a 1931 Duesenberg Model J Murphy Convertible Coupe donated by the Zeccardis of New Jersey, a Boattail 1932 Duesenberg donated by Donald Carr of Ohio Cars, a spectacular Chinese red and yellow L-29 Cord Speedster replica, and an Auburn Boattail Speedster. Cars are arranged so that body styles and colors complement each other.



Twenty-two beautiful overhead light fixtures and seventy-two side lights flood the display room. A terrazzo stairway bordered with modernistic iron railings rises magnificently in the center of the front area to the second floor.

Upstairs, long corridors lead to the original offices of automotive tycoon E.L.Cord and the other executives and designers of the Auburn Automobile Company. Most of the partitions are of Philippine walnut and plate glass. Woodwork is of Philippine mahogany.

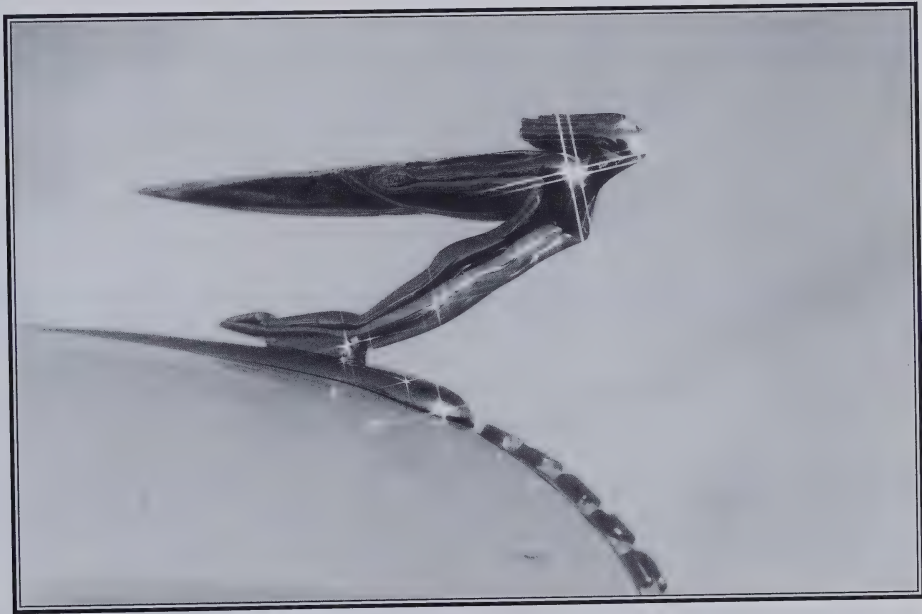




Of several exhibits, two are major galleries—the Lincoln National Corporation Gallery and the Auburn Foundry Gallery of Auburn-Built Autos.

The Lincoln National Gallery opened in March of 1996. It displays “The Cars of Indiana” including details and exhibits of the Hoosier Pioneers, the Grand Makes, Assembled Cars, and others such as the Studebaker and the beautiful Auburns, Cords, and Duesenbergs. The Lincoln Corporation Gallery is designed with mirrors that reflect the cars that shine like jewels. Visitors stand in awe and admiration.

Fourteen states have been major players in the race to produce cars, and Indiana ranks sixth from the top. The total number of different types of cars produced in Indiana, where final assembly occurred, is 150! The little town of Auburn manufactured twelve different makes.



The Auburn Foundry Gallery of “Auburn-Built Autos” is a treasure of enormous significance, a tribute and exhibit of the cars manufactured here between 1902 and 1916. Opened in the spring of 1998, the gallery is a gift from the descendants of B.O.Fink who began operating his foundry business on a lease in 1912. In the space that once housed the domestic sales department of the Auburn Automobile Company in the 1930s, visitors see a room reminiscent of the carriage house of a large home in the early part of the century. They learn about the automotive companies of Auburn that in turn influenced Auburn’s many automotive-related industries. One of the cars, the

1913 Imp Cycle Car, manufactured by the W.H. McIntyre Company, actually bears a casting stamped "Auburn Foundry."

Interesting photo murals cover the room's windows, making it seem that a person is visiting historic Auburn; in truth, the scenes cleverly block out ultraviolet light that would damage the vintage cars.

A third gallery – The Dean V. Kruse Gallery of Early Auburn Automobiles—was unveiled in September of 1998. Located in the southwest corner on the second floor in the former purchasing and cost accounting offices and design studio of the Auburn Automobile Company, the gallery is reminiscent of a showroom dealership complete with wine-colored carpeting, draperies, rich woodwork, track lighting, and stained-glass lamps. The exhibit showcases ten Auburn cars dating from 1904 to 1924, as well as one of their ancestors, a 1900 Eckhart horse-drawn buggy. Sure to draw comments is the 1904 Auburn Rear Entrance Tonneau, the earliest Auburn car in existence.

The Auburn Automobile Company, incorporated in 1903, was actually an extension of the Eckhart Carriage Company, founded in 1874. The stories about these early buggy and auto-minded people are exciting, and the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum is a tribute to them and to the people of Auburn who in the 1970s realized the importance of preserving and restoring the building.

The distinguished Automotive Art Gallery, established in the 1990s by Director Sbarge, exhibits automotive fine art rendered by nationally and internationally recognized artists such as Donna Wolfkill, Peter Helck, Tom Hale, and Ken Dallison. Some of the paintings fetch thousands of dollars, but none is sold through the gallery. Occasionally rare photographs, drawings, and posters from the archives, never before seen by the public, are exhibited as was a recent show, entitled "From The Vaults." Two decades worth of Larry Nicklin's automotive design art, "Another Look," was a showstopper. It featured radical concepts about classic-era cars— for instance, "what if" ideas that explored how certain models would look if designed today.

Visitors will want to see the Hall of Fame where portraits of important friends of the Museum are displayed. Thus far in the Hall of Distinguished Service are Merle Bisel, an invaluable friend of the Museum; Dean Kruse, who conceived the Auction; and Del Johnson, who for thirty-five years served as Chairman of the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival.

The Automotive Literature and Research Library started as an educational project of the local Tri-Kappa Sorority in 1971. Today the library boasts not only an archivist but also a research staff.

Anyone wanting to learn more about the manufacture of the many vintage cars of Auburn should visit the museum or read Chapter 25, "Wheels, Wheels, Wheels—" in the *DeKalb County History*.

The Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum is accredited by the American Association of Museums and is one of the premier automotive museums in the world. People who visit the museum are struck by its beauty, the professionalism of its staff, and its significant reputation.

## 4. NATMUS

NATMUS –National Automotive & Truck Museum of the United States– is housed in the two remaining factory buildings of the Auburn Automobile Company located at 1000 Gordon M. Buehrig Drive, adjacent to the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum. In these buildings, craftsmen once built and manufactured the L-29 Cords. Today NATMUS houses cars from the '40s,'50s,'60s, and '70s. Additionally, NATMUS showcases antique trucks dating back to 1907. One crowd pleaser is the yellow and black Endeavor III, known as “the world’s fastest diesel truck.” In 1993, it hit 232.8 mph(a world record) on the Bonneville Salt Flats.

Other exhibits showcase race cars, electric automobiles, and an old renovated diner(once frequented by Angola sock-hoppers). Also on display is a 1918 American LaFrance firetruck that literally gleams with mystique, thanks to forty-two books of gold leaf.

One section of the museum, “a museum within a museum,” is devoted to a permanent display of toys and models. A “Fifty-year-Old Car Show” exhibit recalls the fads, fashion, music, and memorabilia that accompanied the introduction of fifty-year-old model cars. Here visitors generally spend time reminiscing about the favorite cars of their childhood or teen years or commenting about the old mannikin that looks like former president Harry Truman at the piano.

Readers also may be interested in knowing that in 1997, NATMUS entered a car in the LaCarrera Panamericana Race in Mexico. (Ask at the desk for information.)

Another treasure in NATMUS is the collection of miniature farm equipment made and crafted by hand by DeKalb County resident, Earnest D. Grogg, whose family donated his unusual collection.

Abstract art sculptures by Larry Overmeyer of Kewanna, Indiana, are located throughout the building, each made from machine parts, old springs, plow parts, and wheels. The one in front of the NATMUS building looks like some angular mechanical-looking person with a curl of yellow hair, seated on an old-fashioned high cycle. The ones inside are more traditional with titles such as “Mechanic’s Nightmare,” “Toadstools & Cattails,” “Basket Case,” and “Grasshopper.” Five old-fashioned street lights(donated by Medical Protective Company of Fort Wayne) lend an original charm to the area.

Outside of NATMUS stands a dilapidated-looking building, and if you study it, you will understand its significance. It is the only building remaining of the original Eckhart Carriage Company, which was once located near Iwo Street. That was the carriage company started in the 1870s by Charles Eckhart, which later became the Auburn Automobile Company. Charles and his two sons Frank and Morris Eckhart operated the company and made it successful.

If you are lucky you may see the historic Futureliner, a twelve-ton bus, one of only twelve created by General Motors in 1939, to showcase the future of technology—microwave ovens, stereophonic radios, gadgets, and inventions. Restoration of the Futureliner, headed by Don Mayton, a retired plant manager of General Motors, is expected to take three years and to cost more than \$350,000.



A new heating and cooling system, improved electrical service, roof repair, exit improvements, restrooms, and staffing make NATMUS a year-round attraction.

The restoration of NATMUS was started in 1991, by Auburn attorney and historian John Martin Smith. In the early 1970s, Smith worked with volunteers to establish the Auburn Cord



Duesenberg Museum, which opened in 1974, but Smith also recognized the value and importance of developing this second museum.

It would be impossible to mention the names of the many volunteers who have helped make NATMUS an attractive place— volunteer union electricians, professional painter Mike Pingatore, and others who worked thousands of hours to reglaze windows, repair doorways, and drywall.

And visitors also will appreciate the art of Denny Smith (Densigns of Waterloo) who refinished the large, two-hundred-pound-plus metal door of the walk-in vault. (Note the immaculate gloss, seashell designs in each corner, and “gilding,”— an almost forgotten art requiring the use of real gold.) For many it has been a labor of love.

I'm thinking that when you visit NATMUS, you will surely fall in love with it too.

## 5. Cemeteries

Auburn history is recorded in its cemeteries. To wander through these cemeteries is to experience pleasure and sadness because it is here a person will note the names of many who made Auburn an exciting and dynamic little city.

DeKalb County has fifty-two identified cemeteries, each a veritable repository of facts and dates. The Immaculate Conception Cemetery, the Mott Cemetery, Evergreen, Old Evergreen, Woodlawn, and Roselawn are within the city limits.

Inside the entrance to the Catholic Cemetery on North Main, across from the home of former Mayor Hal Hoham (now the home of his descendants and once Senator Farley's home), two large white angels herald visitors. Along the back fence in the center stands the interesting Mascotte sculpture. The Mott Cemetery on State Road 427, north of the city and across from the E.L. Cord home borders the grounds of Greenhurst Country Club. Note the ornamentation on the gate. Twenty-one graves are in the Mott Cemetery, the oldest one dated 1865.

Evergreen and old Evergreen, or as the marker out front designates THE AUBURN CEMETERY, are located on the east side of South Union Street. Evergreen is divided into sections, and Old Evergreen is the southeast part of the cemetery. Once there was a circular space in the center of Evergreen that was used for memorial services and gatherings.

Roselawn and Woodlawn are located on the west side of County Road 29, southeast of town.

Headstones and other tombstones make a walk through Auburn's cemeteries a study in history, art, and human nature. In Woodlawn, for instance, one headstone depicts a B & O train with the caption, “His Favorite Toy.” In the Immaculate Conception Catholic Cemetery, an unusual headstone made of wood is fashioned like a steeple with a cross on top. A recent addition is the six-tomb Kelly mausoleum, which includes a stained-glass window and many engravings. According to

builders, Donald and Darren Neer, the granite mausoleum is “put together piece by piece and is held together by gravity and adhesives.”

Some individuals who are buried in Auburn not only had a local reputation but also achieved national recognition. For instance, J.I Farley, a Democrat who served in Congress(1933-1939), is





buried in Woodlawn. Author and humorist Will Cuppy made a name for himself in New York and elsewhere with books such as *How to Tell Your Friends from the Apes* and *The Decline and Fall of Practically Everyone*; he is buried—or rather his ashes are—near his mother in Evergreen. The simple red granite marker says, “Will J. Cuppy, WWI, b. Aug 23, 1884- d. Sept. 19, 1949, American Humorist.”

Old Auburn Cemetery has many interesting old-fashioned tombstones. John U. Aschleman’s has a hand pointing toward heaven, Obadiah Shulls’s has a tasseled bell; leaves and ferns mark Ely Kuhlman’s grave, and a Greek column stands by the grave of George Ensley. Many graves are marked by “the cut tree trunk,” such as Goetschius’s plot, whereas Albright’s features “the draped urn.”

Members of Charles Eckhart’s family are buried in Woodlawn not far from what one old-timer refers to as “McIntyre Hill.” Although Wesley Park, founder of Auburn, is NOT buried there, his wife is. (Members of the Lions Club, wishing to commemorate his importance to the city, placed a monument with his name on it next to his wife’s grave.)

Also in Woodlawn are several graves where the tombs are above ground— one is of Irene and Merle Bisel. Merle was a beloved benefactor to the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, the town, the library, and his church. Interred in the mausoleum are many prominent civic citizens, including Dr. Lida Leasure, a civic leader, doctor, and superintendent of schools, a woman who would have been comfortable in today’s world.

North of the city on County Road 36 is the Husselman Family cemetery located in the side yard of a prominent Auburn physician’s home. (Husselman is a well-known name in the Auburn area.) The oldest of the thirteen graves is dated 1852. The original Husselman was a Hessian soldier who fought in the Revolutionary War. Captured by the Americans, he chose not to return to Germany.

“I sort of like looking at the headstones,” Dr. C.B. Hathaway says, “especially in early mornings or late evenings. It’s peaceful having them here.”

In the Indiana Room at Eckhart Library are record books listing the people born in DeKalb County prior to 1882, compiled by historian and genealogist Troas Wise. She and her friends read and recorded the tombstones in the county cemeteries until the mid-1990s. Their work, the result of months of research that included traipsing through area cemeteries, is a significant treasure and a valuable resource, especially for genealogists. Records since that time are available in the book of vital records housed at the Health Department.

## 6. Architecture

Throughout Auburn are homes of different architectural styles, such as the Eclectic Colonial Revival (400 East Seventh Street or 507 North Main), the French Chateau Revival (907 Midway Drive and 1104 Midway), the Lustron Enameled Steel houses (909 North Van Buren and 707 Ohio Avenue), the Spanish Villa (Morningstar Road), and the Union Station (214 East Fifteenth Street), but seven styles contribute most heavily to the architectural fabric of the city. (Visitors will note that some of these homes, such as the large brick home at 730 North Main, have recently undergone extensive renovations.)

1. Of the *Italianate* style, popular from the 1840s to the 1880s, one of the best examples is the home located on the corner of Jackson and Twelfth. Two other good examples are at 302 North Cedar Street and at 1323 South Jackson Street, and there are many more throughout Auburn.
2. The *Gothic Revival* style was popular from about 1830 through the 1860s, and Auburn has several Gothic Revival workers cottages. The picturesque style generally features one to two stories with steeply pitched gable roofs having vergeboards and sometimes finials and pendants. One good example is located at 339 West Fifth Street. Another, the Morris House (pictured on the 1863 DeKalb County map as the Griswold home) and known to many as Doc Baxter's house, presently in poor condition, stands at 108 North Cedar Street. (Although the house is charming on the inside, the outside hasn't been painted in over fifty years. As one resident explained, "Jenny Baxter simply didn't believe in paint.")
3. The *Second Empire* style generally has a mansard roof, usually with polychrome slate shingles forming a distinctive pattern and paired, arched windows, long and narrow at the first floor, with details such as quoins, dental patterns, and modillions. There are two Second Empire houses in Auburn—one located at 218 West Fifth Street, the other, Beecher Hines' showcase home located at 405 South Main.
4. The *Queen Anne* style, popular from the 1880s through the 1900s, is characterized by irregular floor plans and massing, the use of decorative trims, and often even a variety of building materials. Higher style examples had towers, turrets, massive medieval chimneys with terra-cotta or molded brick panels, bay windows, encircling verandas, and frequently leaded, beveled, or stained-glass windows or door panels.

Often Eastlake ornamentation was used, consisting primarily of lathe-turned porch posts with liberal use of spindle and lattice-work trim under eaves, porches, and in the balusters. One fine example is located at 718 North Main Street. Others are the old Frank Eckhart home at 738 North Main, the house at 740 North Main, and the Queen Anne/Free Classic at 207 South Van Buren.



5. The *Vernacular Workers Cottage* often lacks sufficient stylistic detail to be classified as belonging to a specific style, but these homes range in size from simple one-story gable roofed cottages to full two-story houses with either rectangular or L-shaped floor plans. (Several homes in Auburn have a fair amount of Applied Queen Anne, Eastlake, or early Colonial Revival detail or decoration.) These often feature corner brackets, fishscale, and



other types of decorative wood shingles in gables, window surrounds, pedimented heads, and corner pilaster boards. The homes at 718 North Van Buren and 724 North Van Buren are good examples to see as well as those at 115, 119 Washington Street, and 340 West Eleventh Street.

6. *Colonial Revival* homes, built from the 1890s until the 1930s, draw upon variations of colonial styles for inspiration. Generally of two stories, Colonial Revival houses are rectangular in plan and usually symmetrical in appearance. Details such as pediments and



pilasters were often exaggerated, and windows particularly on turn-of-the-century examples tend to be large, with either one light per sash or six to eight lights in the upper sash and one light in the lower sash. A sampling of the many vernacular Colonial Revival style residences in Auburn are at 1304 South Main, 1311 South Main, 804 South Jackson, and 805 South Van Buren.



7. The *Bungalow* style, a one-story house with a shallow to moderately pitched roof, was popular from about 1900 to 1940. Generally there is an open or partially closed-in front porch, often with battered pier supports and a separate gable or hip roof. Eaves have broad overhangs and usually are open with framing exposed. Ridge beams and purlins extend to the edges of the eaves, and truss-type brackets are frequently used. Variations of the bungalow style, include the Japanese bungalow (1151 North Van Buren), the English Tudor (503 North Main), a Spanish colonial bungalow (404 South Cedar), and many neo-classical versions. The home on 1301 South Main Street is a good example of the Bungalow style as are 602 South Main, 1003 South Van Buren, and 425 South Indiana Avenue.

Several buildings in Auburn were designed by Alvin M. Strauss, a prominent architect who also designed the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum building on South Wayne Street. Others are NATMUS, the former Auburn State Bank, the old Auburn Theater (no longer in existence), and the Auburn Apartment Building. Strauss buildings in the county include the Knisely Bank of Butler, the St. Joseph Church in Garrett, and St. Michael's Catholic Church, near Waterloo.

In Fort Wayne, Strauss's work is called "Fort Wayne's Finest." Strauss, a native of Kendallville who trained with noted architects in Chicago, designed the Embassy Theatre and the adjoining Indiana Hotel, the lobby and observation deck of Lincoln Tower, the restoration of the YWCA Villa, the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Baer Field Terminal, and several significant residences. (From time to time, ARCH, Inc., Fort Wayne's historic preservation organization, sponsors bus tours of Strauss buildings.)

In Auburn, it is fun to look for the signature home of builder Rollie Muhn's. Muhn— who for years was Auburn's Santa Claus— built stucco homes from 1930 until the 1960s, most of which are still in good repair.

A few other Auburn buildings are worthy of mention. The Old Auburn Electric Power Building, a brick structure built in 1936, as a Works Progress Administration project at a cost of \$48,500, is a fine example of municipal architecture. Located close to the Auburn Automobile, McIntyre, and Kiblinger factories and the city's well field, it is an architectural gem. [The new 41,000 square-foot electric utility building is located on County Road 29; its facade was designed to somewhat replicate features of the city's old electric power building on South Wayne Street.] The Auburn Post Office building is the other WPA project in Auburn. Its iron grillworks with delicate fleur-de-lis and rosettes and the frieze high on the walls are evidence that utilitarian buildings can be beautiful.

Over the years, City Hall has been renovated to accommodate changing times, but fortunately the integrity of the building remains. Outside, the tower stands tall, capped by an interesting tile square-shaped roof.

There are many other buildings, homes, and churches that could be discussed, and a student of art or design may wish to plan a walking tour.

*The Auburn Architectural Survey* (prepared in 1982, by B.C. Pedigo, Ball State) a catalog of the architectural styles of the older homes in Auburn, will be helpful. It is available at Eckhart Public Library.





## **7. The Heimach Center**

The Heimach Center is named in memory of a beloved former Presbyterian minister who in the 1960s envisioned a place where older residents could meet and enjoy one another's company. Today this senior center promotes a variety of programs and conducts wildly successful bingo games on Thursday nights.

The Heimach Center, located at 1800 East Seventh Street a mile or so beyond the hospital, has a wonderful exercise and recreation area, fondly called "The Back Forty." There shuffleboard, horseshoes, putt-putt, croquet, and other competitions and games are held. In fact, recently the Heimach Center in conjunction with the YMCA and the Parks Department hosted the Northeast Indiana Senior Games. The Heimach Center also offers an outstanding "In-Home Program" and provides transportation.

Since the early 1980s, Meg Zenk has directed the Center's programming. She also was involved in the Center's expansion and subsequent move to its current location.

First located in the old Auburn Baptist Church on the corner of West Sixth Street and North Jackson, the Center was incorporated in 1978 as a not-for-profit organization. Former Auburnite Sandy Mafera served as chairman of the committee that purchased the building in the early 1970s, thanks to several grants and major benefactors.

The building, once known as "the Ward Baptist Church," was the second oldest(if not the oldest) church building(1852) in the county.

In 1970, the church was in deplorable shape, and many citizens pitched in to help clean, repair, and paint. Merle Bisel, in particular, assisted by donating money, an elaborate antique wooden altar, and a great deal of effort. Steve and Roberta Andres lent time and talent designing and painting the interior of the sanctuary. Under Mafera's leadership, the Center promoted Homebound Meals, exercise, and educational programs. People were enchanted with the restored beauty of the old-fashioned sanctuary and used it for weddings and special meetings.

"We loved the old location and the building was beautiful," Meg Zenk commented wistfully, "but the Center simply outgrew itself. We had to move to a larger facility."

After the Heimach Center moved to East Seventh in 1993, the historic church building was purchased by a local artist to be used as a studio, a series of shops, and several boutiques. Aptly named Heavenly Treasures, it beckons visitors with a simple cross on the steeple and graceful arches over the windows. Inside there is beautiful art work waiting to be discovered.

The new Heimach Center is modern and attractive, and three magnificent arches made of Indiana limestone have been erected in front of the building.

"The Madden Arches," as they are known, are historic and unusual. They stand eighteen feet high and are twenty-three feet long and three feet deep. They were created in 1890 to face the door-

way of the Madden Monument Company. Dismantled in 1960, the forty-plus pieces of limestone were stored at the street department for years and years.

When John Bry was fourteen years old, he discovered black-and-white photos of the old Madden Monument Company and fell in love with the ornate facade of arches built by his great-great grandfather. He embarked on an ambitious 4-H project: studying his family's past and preserving the arches. He discovered the disassembled stones strewn in a weed-filled area, and for eleven years he struggled to find a home for them. His interest in preserving the arches led to his eventual vocation as a preservationist.





In 1996, Bry's boyhood dream was realized. Details, articles, and photographs about the arches and about those who encouraged Bry or donated money are interesting and are easily located. Many items are framed and hang in the Heimach Center.

Against the sky these imposing arches seem diminutive, but somehow it is appropriate that Indiana's rolling fields form the backdrop for the historic arches.

## **8. Stained-Glass Windows**

Stained-glass windows grace many churches and homes throughout Auburn, especially older homes. Some front doors are lavish with gorgeous designs. Others have interesting windows. I hesitate to point out where these windows are because once upon a time a prominent young judge, Charles Quinn, had the front door of his Victorian home carted off in the night. The door was truly magnificent—an exquisite work of art and his pride and joy. Of course that was a most unusual circumstance, but it would be awful if anyone so depraved or maniacal should get directions from this booklet to any specific home. So, trust me. Take a walking tour, keep your eyes open, and you will see many artistic and beautiful window treatments.

There are also stained-glass windows in several of our public buildings, especially the Florentine glass at the Courthouse and the art deco windows at the library. Most area churches have exquisite stained-glass windows in their sanctuaries.

On the upper floor of the Masonic Temple on West Eighth Street there are several windows colored blue and green with predominantly vertical designs. They are somewhat similar to the five windows across the top of the entrance to McIntosh School on South Main Street.

At the Presbyterian Church at Twelfth Street and Jackson, four large windows depicting the apostles were given in 1960 by Hazel Fink in memory of her husband. High above the altar is a rose window, visible from the outside, a memorial gift from the Whitten family in the 1930s. In the chapel, on the lower level, eight windows feature little squares and rectangles, each exquisite and beautiful with lavender, amber, blue, pink, and red colors. The chapel is dignified, but also light and airy looking.

A few blocks away, stands St. Mark 's Lutheran Church(211 West Ninth) with memorial windows reminiscent of fine European lace and delicate etchings. In February of 1998, more than forty employees from Bovard Studio in Iowa replaced the stained-glass window sashes and the weak leading that holds the hundreds of individual stained- glass pieces together. The windows, each more than a hundred years old, measure 41,708 square inches. To see them best, you should go inside, where you will also see another old, dark, and rich-looking window, donated by Samuel and Mary Cornell. The windows in the sanctuary are modernistic— bright geometric designs in reds, oranges, and yellows.

The Haite Memorial Chapel doors have stained-glass panels. Inside, a stained-glass window of red and blue shines gloriously, and on the walls hang a number of religious prints, as well as several icons painted by the Reverend Harvey Huntley.

Nearby, the Church of Christ(401 South Jackson) stands at an angle on the corner. (Viewed from the intersection of Seventh and Jackson Streets, the Church of Christ steeple adds interest to the skyline.) Its windows are old and precious, mostly in rich greens and blues featuring arched and round designs.

Out on East Seventh Street, the historic and valuable windows at the Methodist Church were brought to the new sanctuary from the old church building that once was located at Seventh and Jackson. Each large window has a small round insert of some biblical design. In the chapel is a mosaic suggestive of stained glass, a gift from Merle Bisel, one of Auburn's benefactors. The mosaic has three crosses, the Alpha and Omega, and hands, symbolizing God in touch with man.

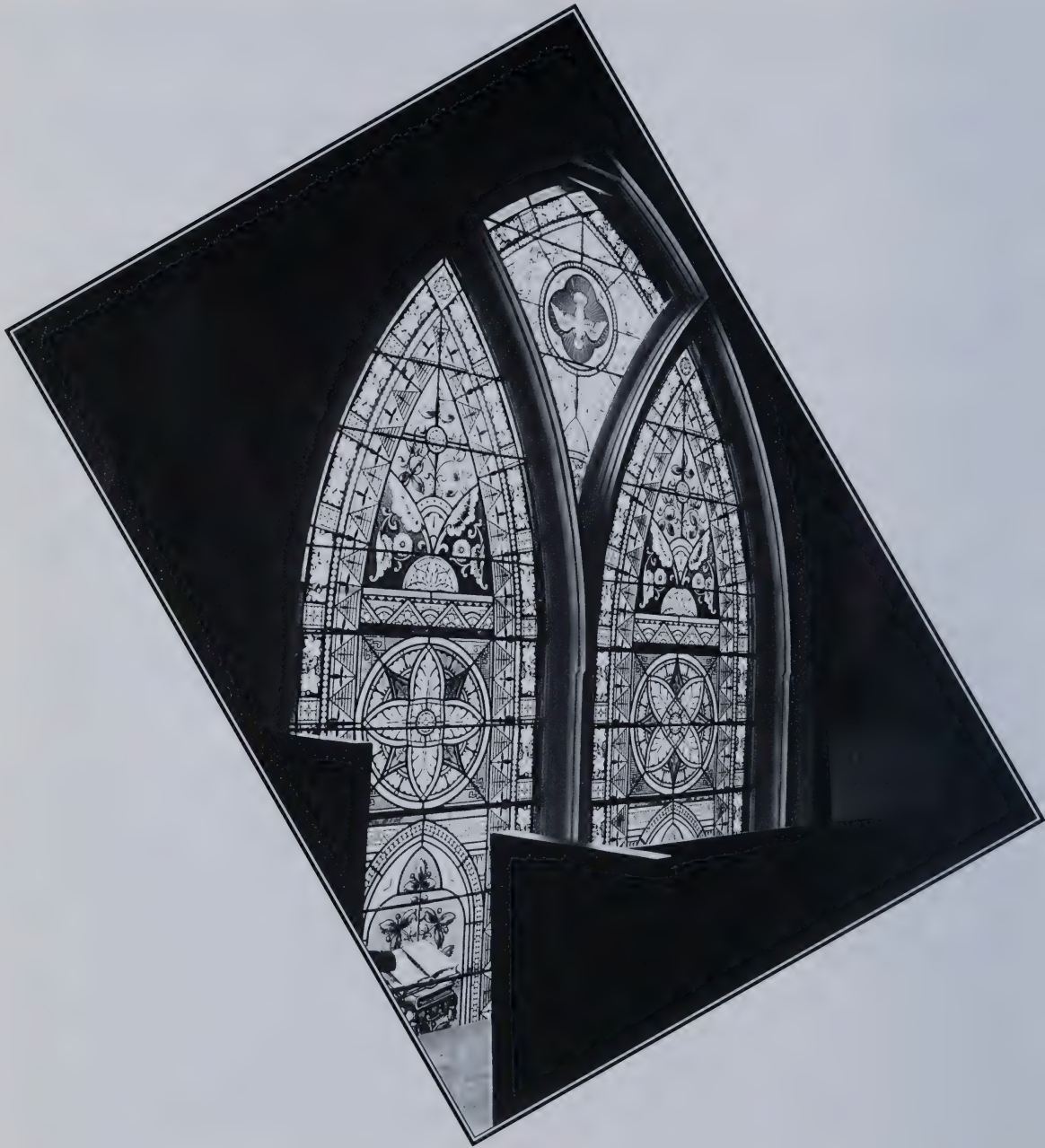
At Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, eight tall side stained-glass windows and other smaller ones depict religious scenes. Sunlight filters through the windows and casts a luminous hue across the pews and large sanctuary. Notice the large mosaic mural of the Virgin Mary on the outside front of the church.

The chapel at DeKalb Memorial Hospital is radiant with a stained-glass window of royal blues, ruby reds, and bright yellows. A ceiling treatment softens the light and casts interesting shadows and designs.

Eckhart Public Library windows (discussed earlier) should not be missed. Members of Auburn Improvement Association recently celebrated the completion of an ambitious refurbishing project of the library's stylistic art deco windows. Visitors should not miss the Florentine glass windows and the dome at the Courthouse (also discussed earlier).

As this souvenir booklet goes to print, there is a man in town who specializes in creating stained-glass windows. His studio is on West Eighth Street. His Web site is: [www.genesisglass.com](http://www.genesisglass.com).

The stained-glass windows and door treatments you see throughout Auburn should make you rejoice along with me that in this small city there are many who value, enjoy, and cultivate the arts. Some serve as members of the Auburn Arts Commission, others create fine art, and others are avid collectors. Their commitment to art— beauty, reason, and truth— may very well be the greatest treasure Auburn possesses.





## 9. Monuments, Signs, Statues, and Streets

### Mascotte's Monument:

In the mid-eighties, artist and former priest, Father Henry Mascotte of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church designed and created a symbolic monument that stands at the back of the Catholic Cemetery(North Main Street). In 1986, when the monument was dedicated, Father Mascotte explained its symbolism.

On the right side above the water scene is the moon representing Mary. (Mary is also known as the star above the water.) The water represents all life and birth waters. About to touch the moon is a spirit form that symbolizes the conception, and on the left is the sun, representing Jesus Christ. The moon (Mary) reflects the sun (Jesus). Twelve stars symbolize the tribes of Israel and Jesus' disciples. The strip of land in the lower corner is to remind viewers that Jesus came to earth. The arch in the center is purposefully small, to remind those who walk through it that a person must enter the kingdom of God as a child.

On the back side of the monument are scenes from the four communities that make up the congregation's parish: Auburn, Butler, Waterloo, and Spencerville.

Angels watch over the cemetery grounds.

### The Lions and the Cannon on the Square:

On the southeast corner of the Courthouse Square, the two lion statues next to the War Memorial once stood guard by the west door of the 1864 courthouse. The cannon was one of several offered to communities by the federal government in 1909, provided the towns paid for shipping from the arsenal at Watertown, Massachusetts. The Auburn cannon was first offered to the city of Angola, but when Angola city officials learned how much the shipping would cost, they rejected the cannon.

Some local citizens heard about the offer and decided to raise the money to bring the cannon to Auburn. Children donated coins and collected \$11. Frank Eckhart sent \$25 from California, and W.H. McIntyre gave \$50— the entire cost \$86.

When the cannon arrived in March of 1909, it was quickly erected and a grand celebration was held. In 1985, the cannon was refurbished. One long-time area resident asked me, "What happened to the two piles of welded cannonballs that used to be by the base of the cannon?"

I do not know.

## The Madden Arches

Three imposing arches of Indiana limestone stand on the grounds of the Heimach Center. (Their history is in Chapter 7.)

## Streets

Many streets in Auburn are named for people who were prominent either in politics or in the automotive industry— people such as McIntyre, Gordon Buehrig, Duesenberg, and Zimmerman. North Main Street is often called “Silk Stocking Row” because of the many beautiful homes built or lived in by executives of the Auburn Automobile Company.

Allison Boulevard, Foley Court, Sanders Drive, Potter Drive, and Ensley Avenue reflect the influence of families who served as civic leaders. West Edge Mall, “Dickman’s Mall,” is associated with Burt Dickman, a former mayor. McClellan Street is named for Judge McClellan, “who came to Auburn from Ashland, Ohio, on the first day of April, 1856.” Records say when he died, “his departure was deeply lamented.”

Some contractors and builders named streets for their children, as Paul Souder did with Rogers Drive and Melony Lane. Several streets at West Edge Trailer Park are named for Burt Dickman’s children.

Duryea Street is named for an automobile maker, as are DeSoto, Maxwell, Kiblinger, Zimmerman, McIntyre, and Cord Streets. Several streets in Auburn were named for presidents: Jefferson, Harrison, Washington, Madison, Van Buren, and Jackson. The street named Clinton now qualifies.

A young man named Billy Kail fought in World War II and was killed at Iwo Jima. The street he lived on is named Iwo Street. That little fact comes from *Shooting The Breeze*, a delightful reminiscence by Eugene Thomas.

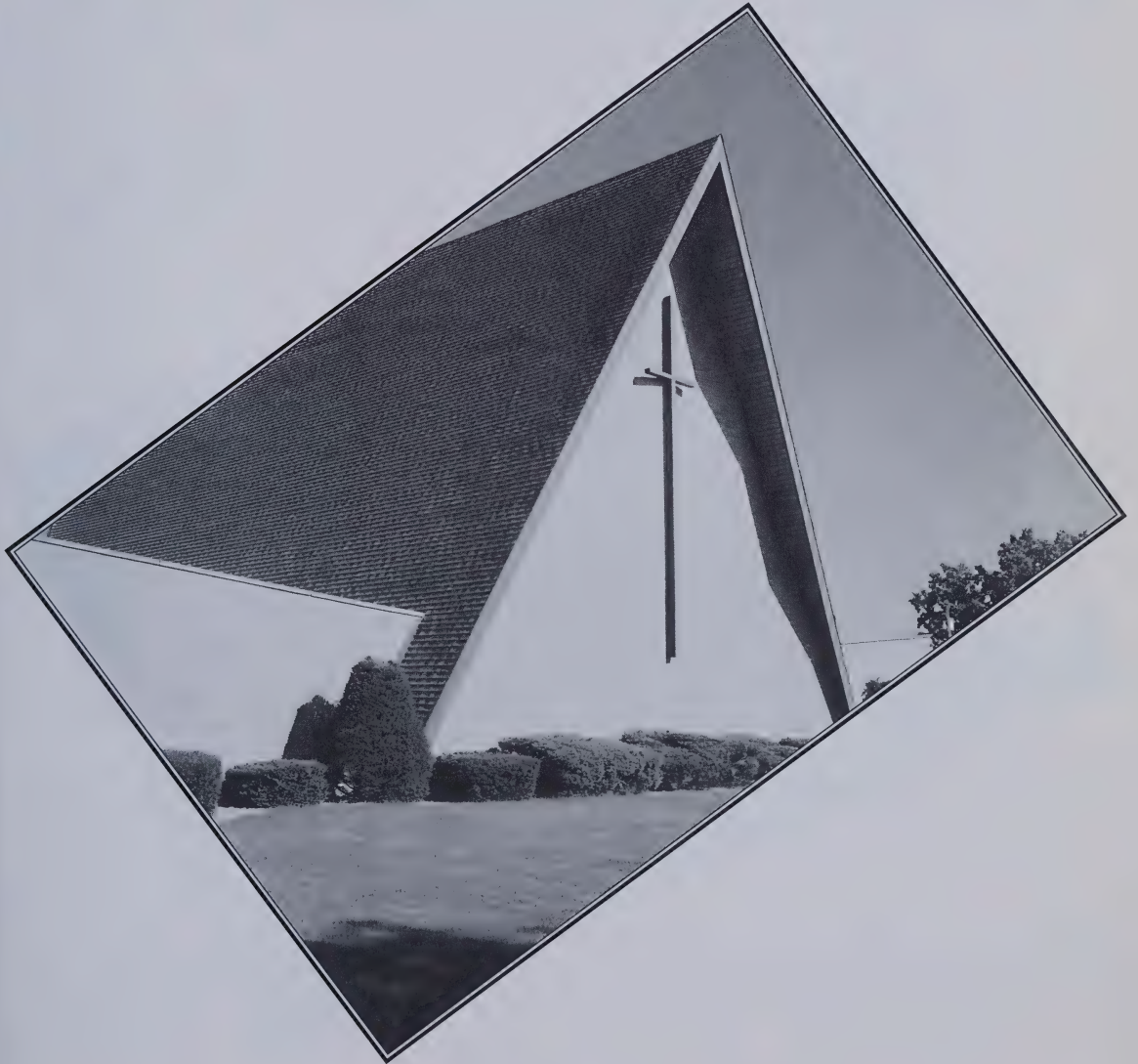
Many streets are named for trees indigenous to the state, a few are Oak, Elm, Walnut, Cedar, Willow, Cherry, Maple, Spruce, and Hawthorne. Greenbriar, once a field, was probably full of briars.

## Classic City

Many local businesses carry the name “Classic City” in honor of Auburn’s heritage, a few of which are a cake-baking concern, a real estate business, and even the utilities company. One game you can have children play is to count the number of times they see a reference to (or some derivative of) the slogan, “Classic City” while downtown.

## Other Signs

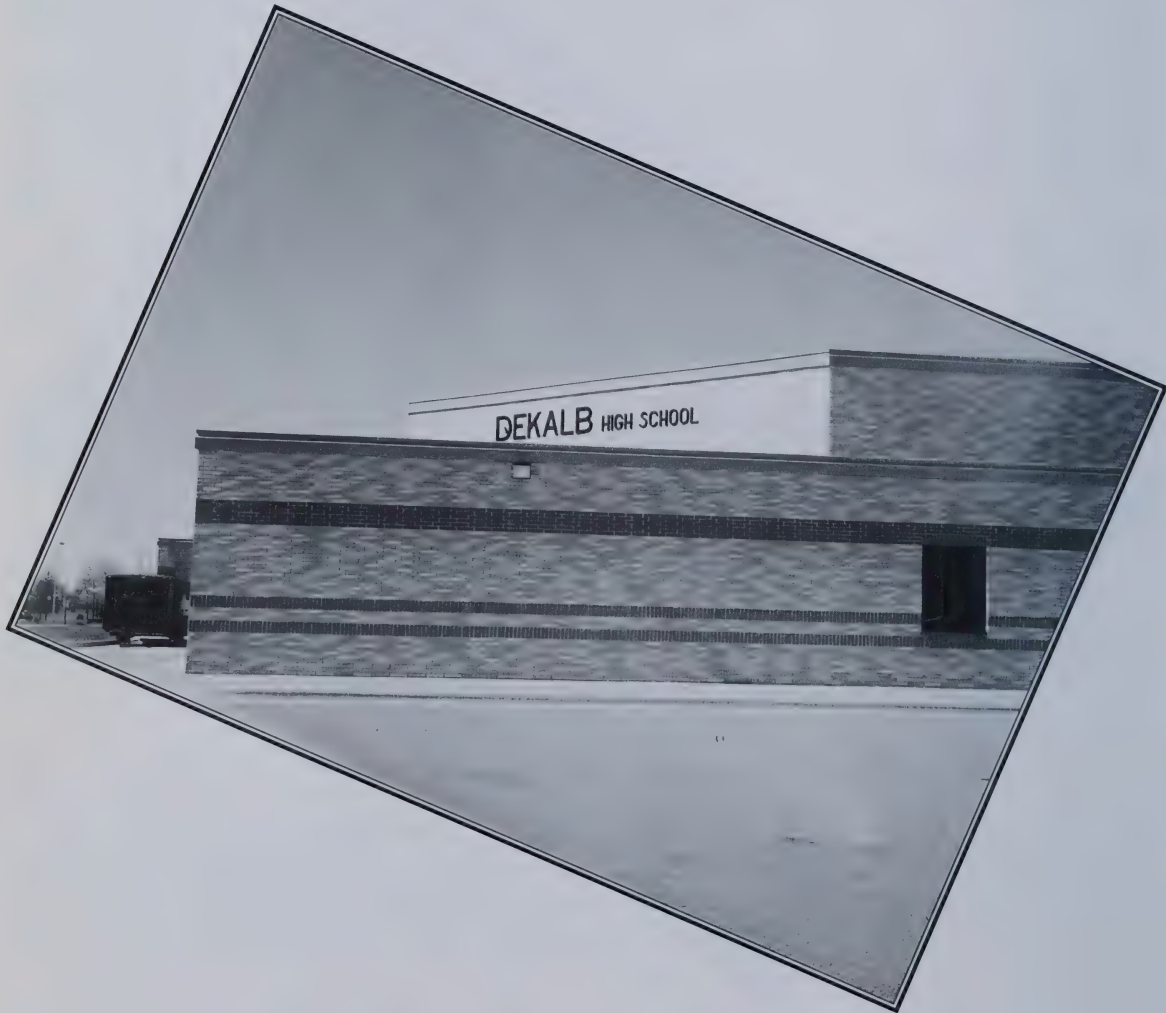
There are other statues and signs that are interesting. Some are modernistic such as the high school building sign and the contemporary little sign by St. Mark's Lutheran Church. Others are more dramatic such as Trinity Lutheran Church's cross and the NATMUS museum sign. A marquee purported to be the largest sign in the state of Indiana advertises Kruse International's auction facility south of the city near Interstate 69.





Most signs in Auburn, however, are the simple and familiar signs that designate the town as a bird sanctuary or attest to various service clubs. Some are so familiar, we seldom stop to think about their artistic worth. Others, such as the wrought iron sign over the gate at Eckhart Park or the names of various downtown buildings, are attractive and unusual.

One of my secret delights is to locate interesting and artistic gates in Auburn. Many homes with iron fences have intricate gates, and there are several yards with attractive wooden gates. Don't miss the unusual gate on the side yard of 701 North Main.



You may still be able to see the faded letters on the sides of the building on the corner of Cedar and Seventh. On the east side of the Rieke Corporation headquarters, the W.H. McIntyre Company sign between the third and fourth floor used to advertise the factory, but it's no longer visible. For years, its faded sign was a fascination. Recent renovations to the building, however, are worth seeing— especially the new front extension facing West Seventh Street with its slightly curved arch capped by geometric designs on the upper facade.

Nearby, Cooper Rubber's new technology center is impressive, and Auburn Foundry's renovated offices give outsiders an understanding of local pride. Several other prominent businesses, factories, and companies have invested in spectacular buildings and landscaping.

Many of the buildings around the downtown square have names such as JOHNSON, SONTAG, ODD FELLOWS HALL, DILGARD, GERIG, designating heritage and ownership. Some are marked by handsome plaques. Some are painted. Some are in concrete. Look to the second and third stories. Above arches and over doorways, much of Auburn's history is recorded.

## 10. Downtown District

The downtown district of Auburn is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. The district encompasses the Courthouse Square and extends from Eleventh Street on South Main to the 200 block on North Main. It includes the old Henry house (built with left-over bricks from the second courthouse) on South Main Street as well as the showcase homes across the street where Dr. F. M. Hines and sons, Dr. A. V. Hines and Dr. D.M. Hines, and later Dr. John Hines, practiced medicine. Descendant Beecher Hines keeps the historic block looking spectacular. Cedar Street marks the boundary on the east. The district includes the 200 block of West Seventh to Van Buren Street and the Post Office building on Jackson Street.

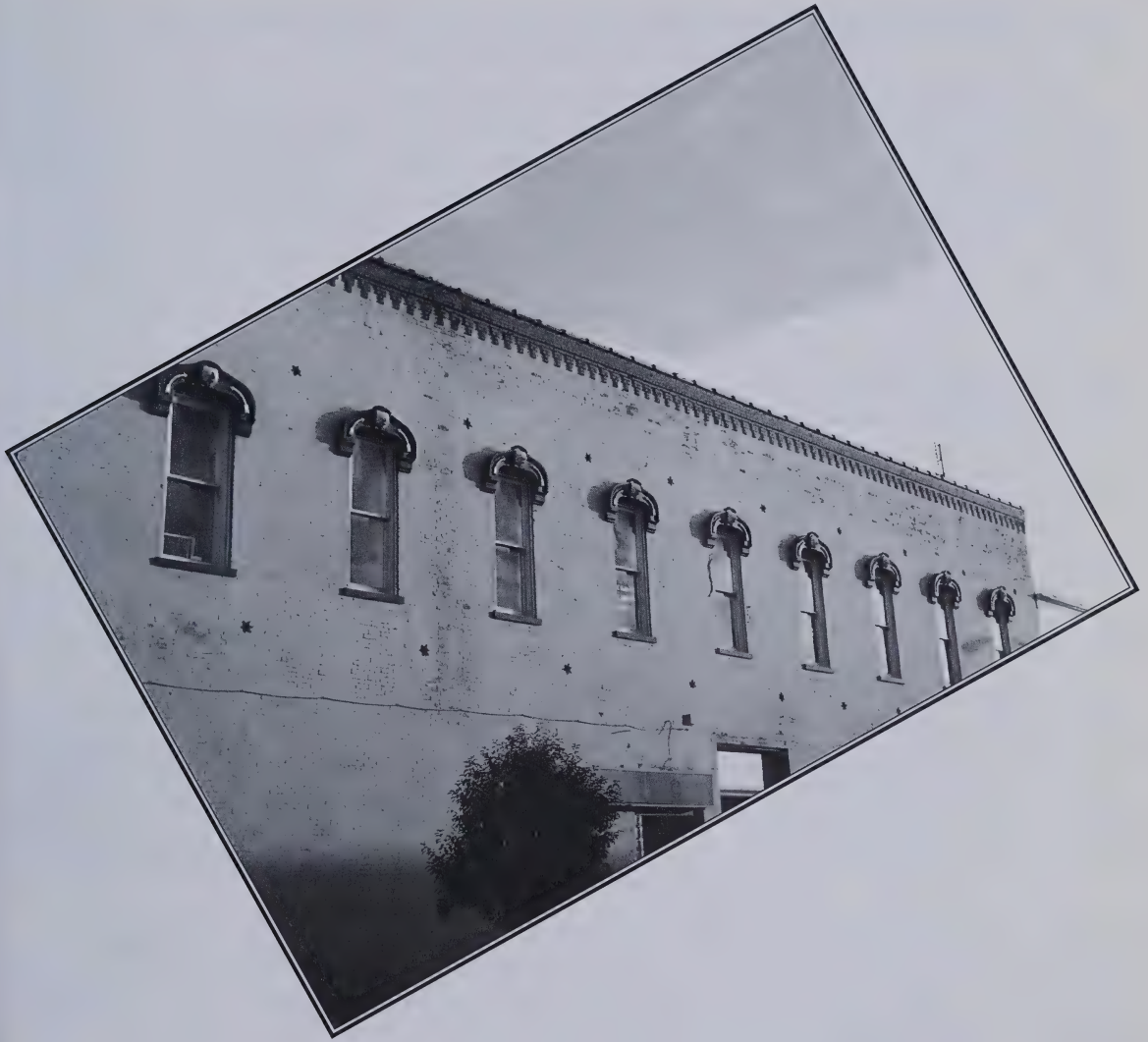
Visitors to Auburn often comment about the historic downtown buildings with their well-maintained and decorative cornices, trims, and entablatures. Many buildings are artistically painted in contrasting colors, and several display unusual architectural details.

On the corner of West Ninth and South Main is the historic Auburn Hotel that dates to the 1870s, at the time considered one of the finest lodging places in northeast Indiana. During Labor Day weekend, ACD Club members vie to stay in one of the thirty-six tiny rooms that in 1915 rented for \$2.50 a night. Visible on the roof are the braces that held the large "HOTEL" sign. Around the fascia of the first floor was the official name.

Hubert Stackhouse writes in his book, *On Further Reflections*: "The Hotel had PRETENSIONS, it did! It was the only hostelry and restaurant in town suitable for the Auburn Automobile executives or their guests, and it strained to live up to the honor, hence, a European chef, a first cook, and two dining rooms!"







Count the second-floor windows of the corner building where Big Red is located on the south side of West Seventh. Each window is decorated with a lion's face. Look north from the square and note the third building on the east side of North Main with its interesting peaks.

Up and down the streets, you will note architectural features— bay windows, artistic brick work over arches and windows, contrasting and painted trims, iron grates, columns, grillwork, and railings.

Here Auburn Automobile Company executives entertained the media and talked over car deals with famous personalities such as Greta Garbo and Gary Cooper.

The building on the corner of Ninth Street and South Main where the Grimms have their law offices, once housed Staman's Drugstore, above which was Dr. Ralph Fox's dental office. The Schaab Insurance building stands next door, a testament to an earlier history. Behind it there is a vest-pocket garden. To the east, in the old days, there was a tavern that invited weary travelers. Today it's the Ninth Street Junction that welcomes visitors for drinks and a relaxed lunch. The modern DeKalb County Office Building, originally Kruse International's headquarters, is on South Cedar and Ninth in the middle of the block beyond the corner building where the former Auburn Motor Sales garage was located. The corner building still displays art deco designs.

In the very early days, the Auburn Hatchery was located on the southwest corner of East Ninth and South Union. In front was a large sign in the form of a chicken. The business hatched baby chicks and sold chicken feed. I mention this simply to remind readers that Auburn was and remains the county seat of a primarily agricultural region. But time and culture bring changes, and Auburn is now becoming known for its many manufacturing and automotive-related businesses.

Across the street is City Hall, built in 1913. Its floors and railings are decorative, with marble, tile, and iron used throughout. It is well worth the climb up the stairs to the City Council's chambers on the third floor to see the murals depicting many historic homes and buildings in the town. The project was conceived by artist Andrea Van Horne and executed by art students from DeKalb High School.

To the north, next door stood the old Auburn jail, which includes the sheriff's residence until the building was unceremoniously razed in 1997. The empty space, however, allows a more open view of the Commercial Building across East Eighth Street, which houses the law offices of VanHorne and Stuckey. Built in 1919, the Commercial Building was the headquarters of the forerunner of the Auburn Chamber of Commerce, whose slogan was "Auburn Forever with Honest Endeavor." For a short time the U.S. Post Office was also located in the building. Look to the second floor and note the artistic design of the upper windows.

Next door, in the courtyard, a sign on the gazebo explains that it was once the location of the old Court Theater and the Auburn Diner. One resident recently recited the various proprietors: "Dad" Louis Schuman, then Herman and Esther Tritch, and then Jo Johnson. The Diner was a gathering place for a group of old-timers—"Hi" Hoben, "Smitty Smith, Forest Gerig, and "Daws" Quaintance— who met to share quips over breakfast.

Before the time of the Diner and the Court Theater, the Henry Opera House was located in the area. Five visible steel columns on the back of the Commercial Building strengthen the single wall once shared with the Henry Opera House.

The Opera House was an architectural delight with a grand interior designed like a replica of a Spanish courtyard. It was here that the whirl of Auburn society took place. An old *Daily* clipping found in a scrapbook (date unknown) described the "christening" of the Opera House: "The

universal judgment of the audience is that it is splendid.” The same article described the building, the wonders of the opening-night play, “The Buckeye,” and commented on the social scene:

There are two ‘boxes’ in the house, and for this week they are occupied by Ex-Congressman McClellan and W.H. McIntyre. The one at the south was last evening occupied by Judge and Mrs. McClellan and Ex-Auditor Coffinberry and wife from Garrett, and the two little granddaughters of Judge and Mrs. McClellan, Aileen and Helen Garwood. The north box was occupied by W.H. and Mrs. McIntyre, and Miss Lillie McTighe of this place and Dr. Thompson and wife, of Garrett.

The article complimented Mr. Henry “on the success of his opening night, and the convenience and good taste of the building that his enterprise has secured for us.”

On the corner, Gerig’s Furniture Store (once Jackson’s Furniture) was a prominent business. One resident recalled that during the depression, she bought an eight-piece dining room set from Gerig’s for \$59.50.

Across Seventh Street, on North Cedar, the squarish office building now located on the corner was once more imposing. Known to most residents as Bowerman’s, a meat market and grocery, it originally was the location of the old post office; during World War I, it was the Armory. In earlier days, this corner was a stop for the Interurban because one of three different depots in the downtown area was located a few doors away on Cedar Street.

On the north side of the Courthouse, several stores bind modern downtown with the era when all commerce took place around the square. In the middle of the block on the north side is the upscale law office of Mefford & Carpenter; in its entry hang several framed photographs of Auburn’s downtown in earlier years. Mid-City Office Systems is east on the ground floor of the three-story Odd Fellows building, and Buttermore’s Appliance store is in the three-story Knights of Pythias building, built in 1901, on the corner. The historic Carbaugh’s Jewelry—established by Edward O. Little in 1900— and several other enterprises, including a travel agency, are located on the block.

On the corner of North Main and Seventh is Auburn State Bank (acquired by National City Corp. in 1998). Established in 1904, the building was designed by A.M. Strauss. Although it has been extensively remodeled over the years, some original features are still visible.

Old photographs show a corner turret, decorative peaks, narrow arched windows on the second floor, and massive steps at the entry. Inside, are several enlarged old photographs of the downtown area in Auburn’s early years. Go in and study them; for fun, count how many buildings in the photographs have signs that advertise “Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco.”

The building on the west side of South Main between Seventh and Eighth, where the Indiana Drapery, Shade and Blind Company is located, was the former location of Schaabs, a fine mercantile business in its day. The Schaab Brothers operated their department store successfully from 1877 until 1975. It is said that the coming of I-69, which made travel to Fort Wayne easy, caused



Schaab's demise. For years, however, its "suit club" was an advertising success, and Schaab's Department Store was well known for exceptional customer service and quality merchandise.

For a long time, City National Bank, "the bank with the answers," was located in the strong, gray-looking building (the former Davenport's store) on the corner. The bank has since relocated to South Van Buren. On the lower floor of the new building, there is a mural painted by Jeanne C.



Gehring in honor of the bank's Diamond Jubilee celebration. If you have the chance to see it, you're in for a treat. (For a wonderful account of Auburn's history read Sigrid Duncan's booklet written in commemoration of the bank's celebration.)

On the corner of West Eighth Street and South Main is the Auburn Hardware store. During the early part of the century, its ad was simple and charming: "We Have It." They probably still "have it" because a hardware store has been located on that southwest corner since 1850, when the Pioneer Hardware first opened. A visit to the basement is a "must see" (beg for a tour). Thankfully the Kokenge family has kept this legacy for many years. Customers and visitors alike consider the hardware store a historic treasure.

Down the block are other offices and shops worth visiting, including the Sprinkling Can. Its owner, Chuck Fifer, is an award-winning florist. Between the hardware store and the next few buildings, if you look closely, you can see a bit of history. Look for the letters "J.P." scratched in the concrete sidewalk at the doorway to what once was the office of Justice of the Peace, Chester J. Hodge. "The marrying justice," operated "a very successful matrimonial emporium" from the turn of the century until about 1940.

Return to Eighth Street and turn west. At the end of the block, the uptown plant of the Kiblinger Carriage Works once was located. In 1913 a disastrous fire destroyed many Courthouse records that were temporarily being stored there while the Courthouse was under construction. In a clipping (date unknown) found in an old scrapbook, it was reported that a Howard Winebrenner, a night watchman, discovered the fire "while making his rounds about 2:30 Tuesday morning." He "attempted to put out the blaze by using the first hose within reach, but when the hose proved ineffective, he called for assistance and a few minutes later a general fire alarm was turned in." The news article states that "work was suspended in the north building pending the adjustment of the loss, even the blacksmith shop on the ground floor being closed."

Once upon a time, the building was connected by means of a footbridge across Eighth Street to its upper level factory on West Seventh and South Jackson. Known as the "Gerig Building," it has at different times been a Kroger store, a furniture store, a drug store, and now is a restaurant, the Auburn House. An awning and a recent paint job makes the corner bright and cheery. Across the street, Cricket's Tavern offers hungry visitors drinks, grilled food, and an atmosphere worth more than money.

On West Seventh are historic homes, many mentioned in the *Architectural Survey*. Where Nugen's Interiors is located, Dr. Bechtel once lived and treated patients. His offices were located in the side section of the building to the east. According to some, an outside staircase rose from his office to a couple of the rooms of his house that he used for his patients, but owners today don't think so. Later, the practice was conducted from a house where Nugen's Interiors now has its parking lot. Dr. Harold Nugen conducted his practice from the corner location.

Peoples Federal Savings Bank whose motto is "Your hometown lender" is located across the street on the corner, where once stood the old Methodist Church, a veritable landmark. Soon after

it was razed, one prominent resident accustomed to stopping at the “corner where the Methodist Church was” didn’t see the building and got lots of ribbing for his “accident.” Traffic lights now direct this busy corner.

I mention this incident because for years and years, Auburn was a tranquil place without much traffic, a time when the downtown district housed a number of businesses familiar to many older residents— Wildermuth Drugstore, Romeiser’s Drugstore, and several candy and confectioner shops.

Over on Sixth Street, there are several historic businesses and buildings. TenEyck’s Florist goes back to the 1900s, established after TenEyck married a woman from Holland whose parents sent over tulip bulbs, a commodity at the time as precious as gold. The shop is owned by one of TenEyck’s descendants and attests to the family’s continuing heritage and commitment to floral creativity.

On the same street, the Doctors D. J. and Vesta M. Swarts had their medical office and “bath house.” Dare I say “therapeutic massage parlor”? Today it houses a respectable insurance business. Across North Main to the west, the Sixth Street Emporium is located in the Spanish style building, a designer’s dream come true. Built in 1928, as a furniture store by Ray C. Dilgard, it was designed like a building he admired in Mexico. (Ray had a much beloved chow, named “Chum,” which he buried on his farm in a child’s fine casket .) Ray, who was one of DeBakey’s first heart patients, died in 1955, a year after he celebrated his fiftieth anniversary. Incidentally his widow, Kate, lived to be a hundred and four years old, crediting cigarettes and a sip of sherry before retiring for her longevity. During the Depression, dances were held and bands performed in concerts in the glamorous Spanish building. Across the street on the corner, in the Dilgard building (1904), Dilgard’s former location, the J.C.Penney Company operated a successful flagship store for decades. After Penney’s closed and after extensive remodeling, a number of boutiques and a fabulous eating place were established. Explore this corner of Auburn. It’s a delight.

A block to the north is the Kruse Building, an old building known to many as Rohm Chevrolet. After Rohm moved, the Allison family operated several businesses in the building, including a hardware and a car restoration business. Doorways and entries faced Sixth Street making the block a busy one. Today the building’s main entry faces North Main; visitors can see the name and purchase date of its new owners.

Down on Ninth Street, Martha’s Popcorn Stand with its little hydrangea bush was a popular spot for many years. “Martha’s Bench” is now an artifact housed at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum. Next to “Doc Traush’s,” as the stand probably should now be known, is the newspaper plant built in 1921, by Vernon E. Buchanan, dean of Auburn newspapers. *The Evening Star*, the result of a 1913 merger of the *Courier*, *Dispatch*, and the *Evening Dispatch*, is published daily and continues to expand readership. The present buildings have a somewhat modern look because they were rebuilt after the plant burned to the ground in 1913.

When I first moved to the Midwest in the 1960s, I was surprised to find that Auburn had a daily paper. That discovery let me know that Auburn was different from most towns its size, and it was one of the first things about which I wrote to my family in the Carolinas.





Auburn's downtown area exudes an aura of early 20th century nostalgia with its Beaux Arts classicism style. A stroll around the square will convince you that Auburn has many buildings worth visiting and preserving, each with a story and a history. I encourage you to take a walking tour.

## 11. Festivals and Events

Auburn celebrates a number of festivals and events, but the main one is the annual Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival held each year on Labor Day weekend. Events include a premier craft show (on Sunday) where artisans set up booths and sell wooden and country items, floral arrangements, pottery, clothing, toys, and jewelry.

The Collector Car Auction and Show takes place out at Kruse International, but other attractions in town draw hundreds of people. One is the RSVP Quilt Show where approximately one hundred quilts are displayed in the education wing of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. These exquisite quilts are judged for quality in design, construction, stitching, and eye appeal.

People who have no interest in cars, auctions, or parades come to Auburn by the droves to take in the Tri Kappa Antique Show, another high-quality event. Dealers sell and display old and rare books, paper collectibles, silverware, fine china, American art pottery, fine art, military medals, political memorabilia, Tiffany, Steuben, Durand, Moser, and Quezal art glass, signs, fixtures, vintage clothing, dolls, oriental rugs, estate jewelry, and 18th and 19th century period furniture. Dealers are reviewed annually to ensure that their offerings are of the finest quality. The show is dedicated to authenticity, and people who attend say it is one of the best antique shows in the Midwest.

The parade of Classic Cars on Saturday morning is a feast for the eyes. Members of the ACD Club return to Auburn each year to renew acquaintances and to showcase their Auburns, Cords, and Duesenbergs in a parade unlike any other.

The cars glide by, their colors shining like gems, their engines and motors purring so smoothly they are barely audible. Later there will be parties and a gala ball. Goodness, man, check your spats and your white summer shoes! Pull out your cane and your best string tie! Tell your lady to dress her best, 'cause there's going to be one heck of a party tonight! There'll be dancing under the stars too— the Charleston and other high jinks— making even the old fellows whisper, "Oh golly geez, Mabeline, dear Josephine, you're one fine gal tonight!"

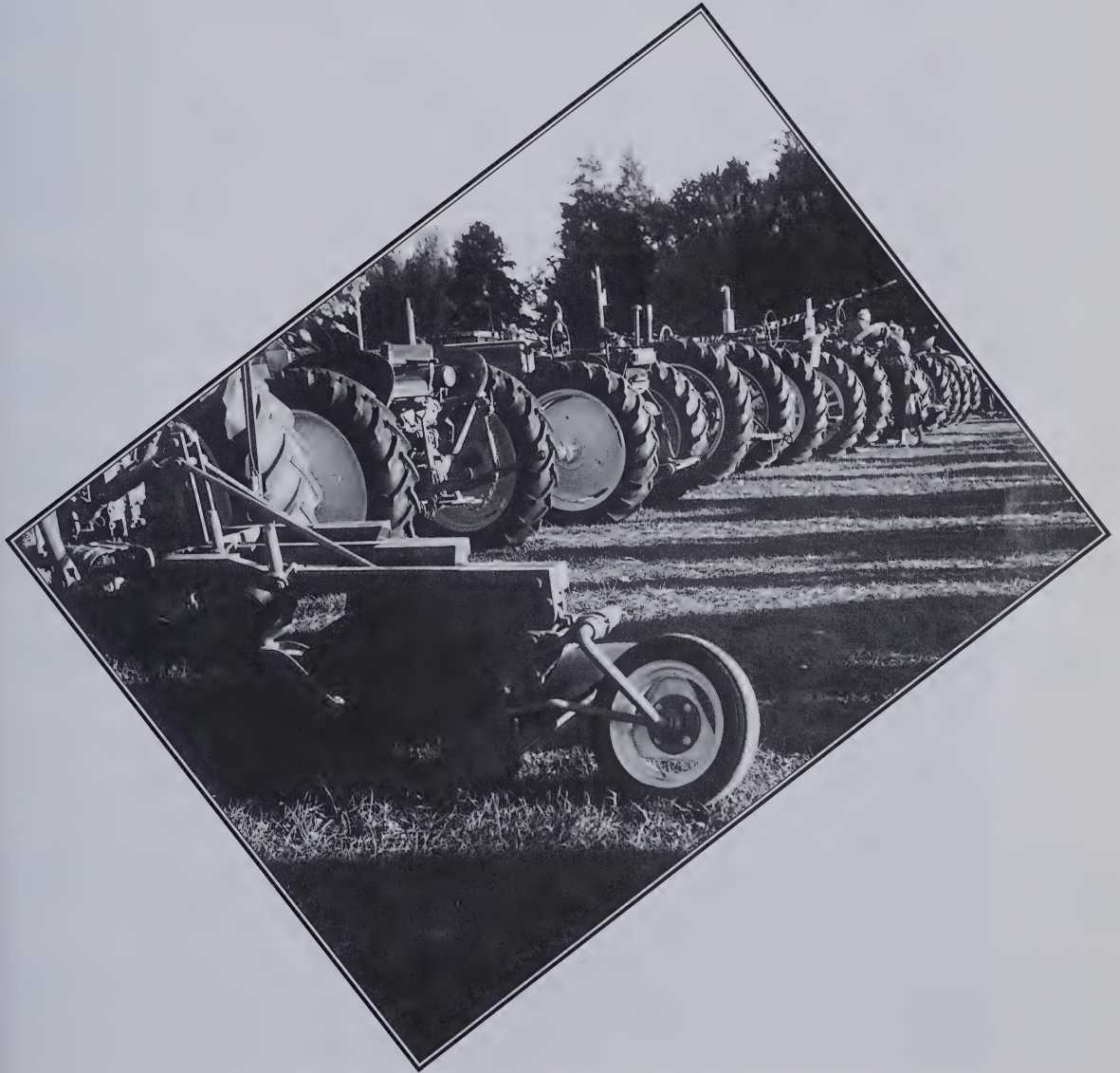
The Decorator Showcase House tour, a popular attraction sponsored by the Auburn Improvement Association, benefits the beautification of the town. Generally, but not always, one house that is historically significant is showcased. Sometimes there are two. Decorators work for months to make this event outstanding.

*The Evening Star* prints special supplements, souvenir editions, and awards a prestigious prize recognizing someone important to the Festival. Over at Waanders' Bookmark, there is likely to be an author signing books.

The Auburn Cord Duesenberg weekend has become famous, receiving coverage by the national media. Visitors, including national and international celebrities, come from all over the world. Crowds swell to more than 200,000. A gala ball at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum rounds out the weekend.

Throughout the year there are other happenings, such as summer horse shows, a tractor show, an Autumn Fest, plane rides over the city, or hot-air balloon meets.

Some Auburn events are quaint and homey, some a bit hokey. Some are commercial endeavors. The Fourth-of-July celebration is held at Kruse International Auction Park with fireworks, food, and entertainment. The Downtown Merchants Association Sidewalk Days occurs in mid-sum-





mer. The DeKalb County Free Fall Fair is held in late September with rides, exhibits, game booths, entertainment, and parades. Bands march, dance troupes perform, and singers sing. It's all old-fashioned and fun. Auburn is one of the last towns in the state where the Fair is still staged in the downtown area.

In the spring, the City sponsors Pride Week. Special tours feature businesses, government buildings, or points of civic interest. Downtown businesses vie to receive the annual "Golden Broom" award, and events are held such as "Foxfire" or perhaps a celebrity auction at one of the museums.

Throughout the year the DeKalb County Concert Association brings concerts to subscribers, and the Auburn Arts Commission, Inc. promotes local artists, readings, and the "Snowbound Writers Contest." The Commission has sponsored two major one-man shows— nationally recognized Brian Baker's oil paintings were exhibited in the beautiful Spanish building on Sixth Street and watercolorist Andrea VanHorne's show was held in the historic building and garden at 210 North Main.

Throughout the year, the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum showcases fine automotive art in its Automotive Gallery, and in the spring, members of Tri-Kappa, an Indiana philanthropic sorority, hold a four-county art show with prizes and awards. For instance, "Run Chickens Run," by Tiffany Cook Lesser was Best of Show, and Linnae Zerkle's "Migraine Daze" received first place in fibers in the 28th Annual Show.

In the fall the Kiwanis Club bakes and sells pumpkin loaves, a fund-raiser for the Children's First Center, and its endeavors have almost become an "event." Similarly, members of the Eta Xi Chapter of Psi Iota Xi Sorority usher in the Christmas season by sponsoring the popular, always sold-out, Christmas Pops Concert by the Fort Wayne Philharmonic. For nearly twenty years, the DeKalb Oratorio Chorus, under the direction of Sondra Franks, has presented "The Messiah" by George Handel.

Before visiting Auburn, you may wish to check with the Chamber of Commerce(South Jackson Street across from the Post Office) or call 1-219-925-2100 to see just what IS scheduled.

## **12. Parks and Gardens**

Auburn is a city of parks. You will find parks and gardens in every corner of town, pleasant places to rest or enjoy picnics. When I asked people to list six attractions, several wrote, "a ball game in one of our parks."

It's true. There is always some sport going on(weather permitting) in one of Auburn's many softball, baseball, or soccer fields, whether it's a Little League game or a neighborhood slow-pitch softball. I won't even try to mention all the parks, because it seems that a new one is always being created.

In 1911, philanthropist Charles Eckhart gave to the city a gift of seventeen acres for a park. Naturally it is named Eckhart Park. That park, through which Cedar Creek flows, is located at East Ensley and South Cedar, and the Auburn pool is located across the street. The Olympic size pool entices hundreds of youngsters every summer because of its facilities and huge water slide. One person answering the survey about Auburn listed the city pool as his number- one attraction. The pavilion in Eckhart Park can be used for reunions, picnics, or summer day camps, and from time to time for special events such as a "Summer Revue," a Community Band concert, a civic or church fund-raiser, or a Christmas walk.

Near Eckhart Park is the old Auburn High School football field, once the site of Robinson's Park, a baseball park in use during the era of the Eckharts. It is now named Carr Field to honor former high school athletic director Earl Carr and is designated for softball and soccer. Zeke Young Field on the high school grounds honors a former football coach and teacher. Both fields are owned by the school district.

Smith Acres, on Auburn's east side, was a gift to the city from the John D. Smith family. Tennis courts, softball fields, and picnic facilities make this park especially convenient and appealing. Auburn's painted water tower stands nearby.

In 1994, Glenn and Thelma Rieke donated sixty-three acres on the north side of Auburn to be used for parks. Recently the city voted to acquire land for a connecting greenway to the park.





Throughout the town are vest-pocket gardens and neighborhood parks that are heavily used,—parks such as DeSoto Park (one acre), Riley Park (one acre), Forrest Park (three acres), Thomas Park (five acres), Carr Field (six acres), and Jaycee Memorial Park (twelve acres) make Auburn attractive. Many of the children's swings, merry-go-rounds, and jungle gyms have been painted in primary colors; their bright colors and interesting shapes delight the artistic eye.

Whether you drive, walk, bike, or jog, you will see people enjoying Auburn's parks and gardens. You will see people sitting on their steps, porches, or swings. Some will wave. Others will be busy with children or entertaining friends. Not everyone is shut behind closed windows— only in hot or terribly humid weather. When the weather is comfortable, most people are outside.

Frankly, I doubt that you will find lovelier flower gardens than those that grace certain homes in Auburn. One that deserves mention is "Clara Mary's Garden,"—the Winebrenner house (for years known as the Madden then the Husselman house) on East Seventh Street.

Jeanne Gehring, owner of the Studio Gallery [northeast corner of the railroad tracks on West Seventh Street], has a garden outside her shop that is the envy of many. One resident assured me that on Nineteenth Street "there's a sanctuary of antique roses you can't afford to miss." In East Auburn, along the alleyways behind several homes are many old-fashioned gardens and flower beds. Homes on Main Street also have flower gardens, but many are tucked away behind the houses.

If a person in Auburn doesn't have a flower garden or patch of petunias in front of his or her house, most likely there will be a pot of geraniums, some window boxes spilling vines and petunias, or some urns of impatiens on the steps, by a doorway, mailbox, or lamppost. My neighbor, for example, grows exquisite dahlias and moonflowers by his mailbox. Another friend cares for a beautiful water garden complete with carp, reeds, and oriental plantings. Another friend grows orchids as a hobby, and yet another, tends a wisteria vine that blooms so profusely it must be blessed by the angels.

Downtown, amid and between buildings, are little gardens, such as the gated garden on Sixth Street next to the Emporium. Larger is the Heimach Biblical Garden on Twelfth and Jackson Streets, a place where people can rest or meditate among plants, herbs, and flowers mentioned in the Bible.

Many businesses have attractive landscaping and plantings. The entry to the YMCA, flowers in the windows at Northern Indiana Fuel & Light and at Renaissance (the old Post Card manufacturing company), the row of trees along East Fifth Street at North Main, the well-tended flowers in front of Peoples Federal Savings Bank, and the greenery in the arrangements at the Sixth Street Emporium contribute to the overall appearance of the town. Even in front of City Hall, there is an attractive little park with a bench. On Tenth Street near the back entrance of the DeKalb County Courthouse Annex, there is a Master Garden display, complete with herbs, garden sculpture, annuals, and perennials.

Members of the Auburn Garden Club help keep Auburn beautiful. In addition to various projects, they plant and maintain the butterfly garden at Eckhart Public Library, the flowers near McIntosh School, and the flowers around the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum.



At the Courthouse, Clint Stephens tends the grounds and flowerbeds; across the way is Courtyard Park, and on East Seventh Street, DeKalb Memorial Hospital showcases flower beds and plantings.

The maple trees planted along the front lots of East Third Street form a canopy of color in autumn, and the tree-lined boulevards on Green Briar and on Midway Drive are scenic.

Several landscaping companies help keep Auburn beautiful throughout the four seasons. The Log Cabin has supplied Auburn residents with flowers and fruits for nearly fifty years, and plants from Gallagher's Greenhouse complement many homes. The Auburn Improvement Association motivates residents to keep their homes and neighborhoods spruced up and attractive.

Flowers seem to reflect the attitude of the town—pride in ownership, love of nature, and peace.



### 13. The Tri-Kappa Art Collection

One of Auburn's valuable treasures is the Alpha Pi Chapter of Tri Kappa Sorority's commitment to art. For more than thirty years, the Chapter has promoted a spring art show generally held during Pride Week. From many entries and winners, Tri-Kappa makes a Purchase Award that is added to an on-going exhibit called the "Tri-Kappa Art Collection." Most of the Kappa paintings are on display throughout the halls and offices of DeKalb Memorial Hospital, but there's no order

to the collection. For instance, the photography of Gerry Nagel and Dr. Stan Greenberg hang amid watercolors, oils, and pencil drawings. Each painting is marked with the artist's name, the title of the painting, and the year it was selected as a Purchase Award.

A list that explains where each painting hangs is available at the Executive Secretary's office, but I wish there were some better way to make this valuable collection more visible and accessible to the general public.

It is gratifying that most of the paintings in the collection are by DeKalb County artists, many of whom have gone on to achieve wider recognition for their talent.

For art lovers who visit Auburn, I suggest that they see the Tri-Kappa Art Collection, the sculpture at NATMUS, the Automotive Gallery at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, the paintings at Eckhart Public Library, the stained-glass windows at the Presbyterian Church, the icons at St. Mark's, the dome at the Courthouse, the altar piece in the chapel of the Methodist Church, and the art displays at DeKalb Middle School and DeKalb Central High School.

If possible, arrange to visit a few local artists.



## 14. The YMCA

When Charles Eckhart and his son, Frank, donated \$40,000 to the city to build a YMCA, their gift made history. In 1914, when the YMCA was dedicated, no other city with fewer than seven thousand inhabitants could boast of having a Young Men's Christian Association. Interestingly enough the philanthropy of the Eckharts came about "as a result of the liquor business in Auburn in 1908." Eckhart was head of "The Social Purity Group," and after his retirement, he devoted his time to the Advent Christian Church and the Prohibition Party. (He even ran for governor of the State of Indiana in 1900 on the Prohibition ticket.)

According to historian John Martin Smith in *A DeKalb County History*, there was a drive by a number of prominent citizens to rid the town of its nine saloons. The state allowed a local option law to enable the city to become dry, but the local argument against such was that there would be no place in Auburn for working men to congregate and relax. Eckhart believed a YMCA would provide a good alternative to saloons and paid the total cost of the building, some \$56,000. Auburn still has a number of taverns.

The old Auburn YMCA is located on the site of the old Pioneer Hotel Tavern, once known as the Auburn House.

The YMCA building style is termed 20th Century Eclectic. It is a bulky-looking, three-story facility made of brick with artistic windows. Designed by Chicago architects, the building had three floors. On the second and third floors were sleeping rooms that single men could rent; below were a gymnasium, a pool, bowling alley, canteen, and parlors.

Women were not allowed to use the facilities until 1921, and then only on certain days.

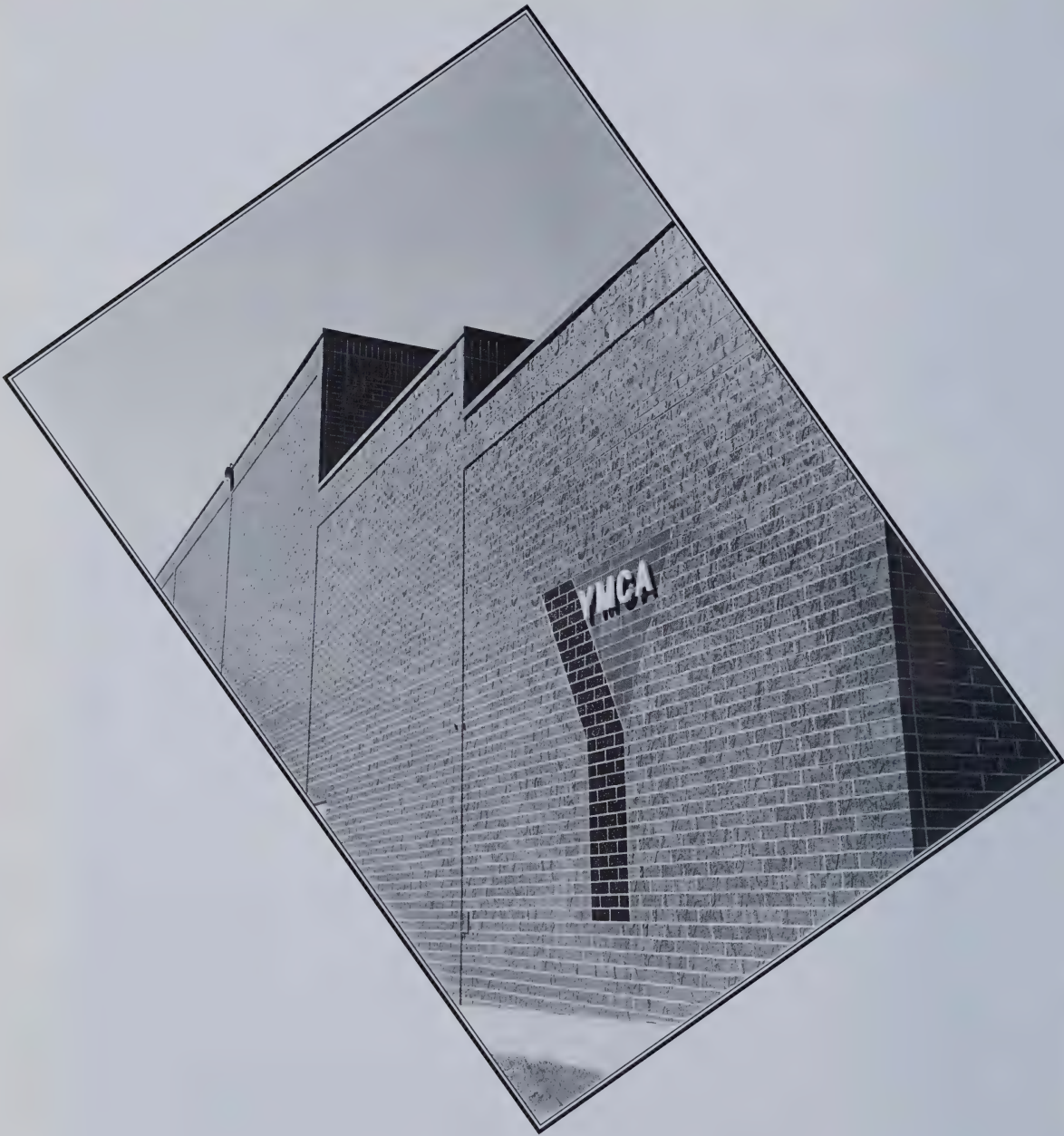
Old-timers say the bowling alley was an interesting place to gather; a few recall working there. In order to set pins, a person had to step on a lever under the end of the alley. The lever raised ten steep pins on which the bowling pins were placed. The pinsetter got paid two and one-half cents per frame. Bowlers paid ten cents per game.

By the 1980s, the YMCA had to expand. In 1981, the old 1914 building was remodeled, and a balcony track, racquetball courts, new locker rooms, saunas, and whirlpools were added. A new pool was put in, as well as a large gymnasium.

Within a decade, however, membership again had grown so rapidly that additional facilities were needed. Dana Corporation donated land on North Street, and a second YMCA was built. The new building incorporates a day-care area, more weight rooms, another pool, racquetball courts, and a gymnasium. Dedicated in 1997, the building is modern in design, efficient, and cost effective.

These buildings give area residents many opportunities to exercise, socialize, have fun, and develop better physical and mental health.





## 15. Greenhurst Country Club

If you like golf, you will like Greenhurst.

For a fee, of course.

Greenhurst Country Club is a private club, but many area industries have memberships at Greenhurst that allow their employees to use and enjoy the facilities. Club regulations permit guests to play the course at least six times before being required to join.

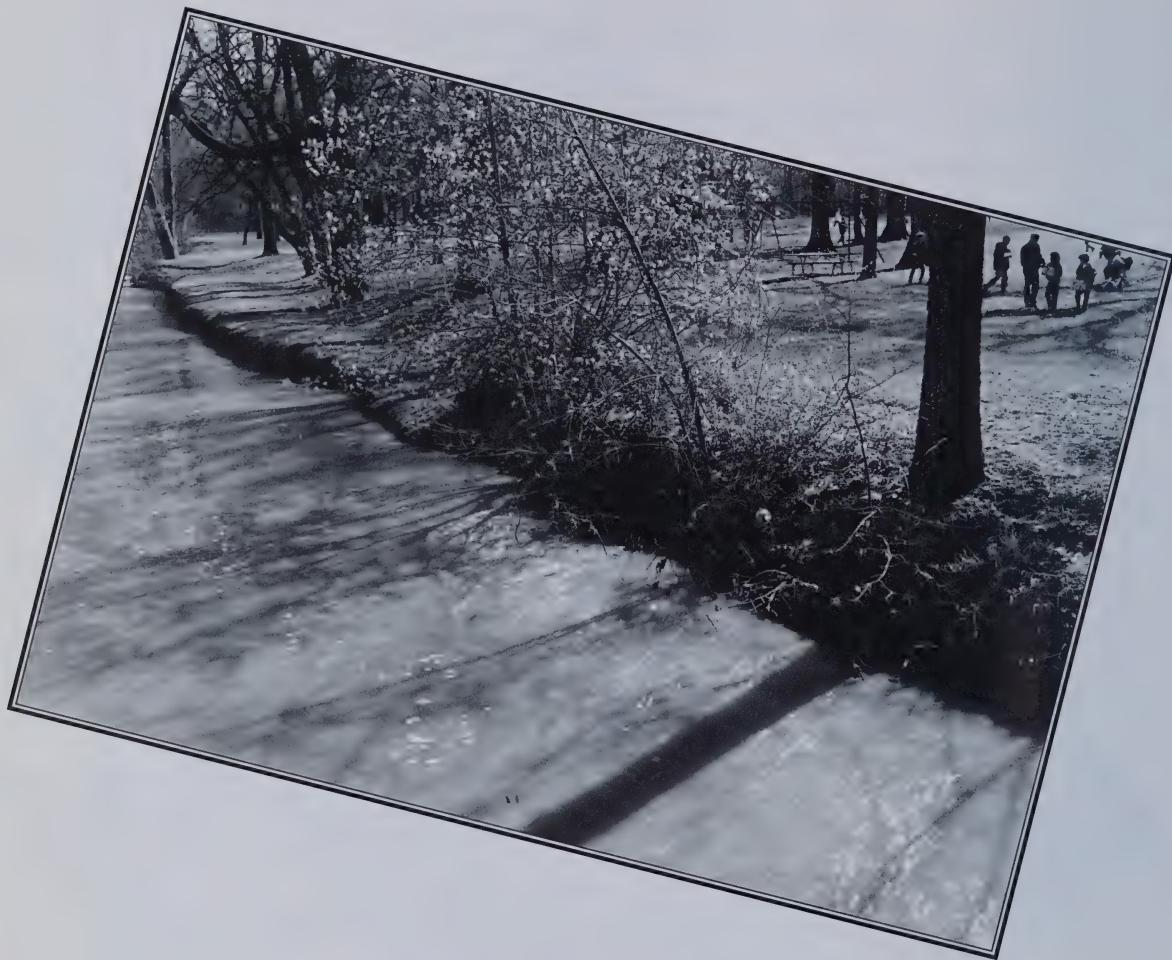
Greenhurst Country Club has long been one of Auburn's finest treasures. It was built on the Mott Farm in the 1920s by a group of Auburn businessmen, and since the place was referred to as Green Hurst, the club is aptly named.

The Mott home was used as the clubhouse until it was replaced in the 1970s. A framed picture of the Mott home hangs in the club, and some members fondly recall the old place with its many cozy rooms.

In one of his several *Auburn Reflections*, Hubert Stackhouse, writes that as a lad he caddied for B.O. Fink who helped found the club. Stackhouse says, "A firm tread on the quaking ground of holes #2 and # 11 at Greenhurst C. C. will remind golfers of the fact that Cedar Creek once ran a different course." Since Stackhouse did his caddying, various holes have been moved, but even so, Greenhurst Country Club is something like the classic *A River Runs Through It*— Cedar Creek runs through Greenhurst. Golfers beware.

Avid golfers can also enjoy games at Deer Track Golf Course, south of Auburn, Cedar Creek Golf Club, the Garrett Country Club, and Autumn Ridge. Located next to Greenhurst Country Club, is the Bridgewater Golf Course, a venture by a group of local investors. Their theme is "As we build it, they will come."

Greenhurst Country Club is scenic, well-tended, and offers a challenge to golfers.



## 16. Cedar Creek

Cedar Creek is one of two main waterways flowing through DeKalb County. The other is the St. Joseph River, a seventy-five-mile river that originates around Hillsdale, MI, flows southward, and cuts into DeKalb County around Newville, St. Joe, and Spencerville before moving south into Allen County.

Cedar Creek can be enjoyed from several locations. It passes through the city under the First Street bridge, Seventh Street bridge, Ninth Street bridge, and the Nineteenth Street bridge; you may prefer to see the Creek at Eckhart Park(near the Museum). Occasionally some organization



sponsors an event in the park that features the Creek. For instance, the Chamber of Commerce for several years held a fund-raiser early during Pride Week, raffling off little plastic ducks for a "duck race" downstream. On several of occasions the Creek was swollen from spring rains making the race a "disaster." One finish-line judge recalls how he expected the ducks to come floating serenely by but instead he had to fight a flotilla of bobbing ducks in a furious current.

The bridges on First and Seventh Streets offer the best views of the Creek for walkers. In the archives at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, there is a picture postcard that shows the Seventh Street bridge connecting the Post Card Manufacturing Company to the town. The picture shows that beyond the Post Card building there was nothing but fields and forests.

It was near the intersection of the Creek and the Seventh Street bridge that in 1837, Wesley Park built his little log cabin in the wilderness.

Several older residents recall that in the early part of the century, an adventurous person who crossed Cedar Creek where First Street bridge presently is located would find himself in "wild bear country."

Cedar Creek originates in the northwest quarter of the county, gaining momentum from various ditches and drainage basins before flowing south, then southwest to empty into the St. Joseph River in Allen County. Where Cedar Creek exits DeKalb County, it is classified as a "wild and scenic stream" by the Department of Natural Resources. Kelso Davis, an Auburn photographer for sixty years (he retired in 1998,) kept in his shop on South Main Street a large color photograph of Cedar Creek. Each time I saw it, I realized anew that Cedar Creek deserves its description.

Many people have homes along Cedar Creek. One well-liked veterinarian named his place "Tough Creek," explaining "the farther up the crick you go, the tougher it gets." In an aside, Dr. W.V. Horbacker recalled that he once was summoned at midnight by someone who wanted to bring out his horse for the Doc to check. Thinking it probably was a drunk at some bar, he dismissed the idea. Later the doorbell rang at 2:00 a.m. "A flick of the porch light revealed the Lone Ranger and his wife at the door. In the driveway was a trailer carrying his horse, Silver, and Silver's young fill-in." Afterward, the Lone Ranger continued on his way to the toll road where he was to meet "Tonto" and head for New York.

At Greenhurst Country Club, Cedar Creek is crossed by means of several foot bridges. Nearby on Morning Star Road, Cedar Creek flows through a pretty stand of trees. Along the road, you will note many boulders, formed by glaciers from which the entire landform of this area was fashioned. Historians suggest Cedar Creek was once a "meltwater drainage in the greater Wabash-Maumee" systems.

In the mid-1980s, Boy Scout Troop #169 sponsored canoe tours from Morningstar Road to Eckhart Park. One person who took the canoe trip described the bottom as "nicely rocky, with just a few places having big, pointy, protruding canoe-scraping rocks. The route was and is alternately pristine, littered, sweet-smelling, odor-plagued, straight, winding, rural, and urban. Thick overhanging greenery and bird songs give way in the north by the Little League Park, to houses and

vehicle bridges.”

Generally Cedar Creek is shallow except during floods. In 1914, one resident commented to a newspaper reporter: “Cedar Creek often backs up and floods the cellars and the ground up to the first story.” That fact was true because during the Flood of 1982, residents along Cedar Street and across the Creek on Duryea and Hawthorne Place watched with alarm as water rose fifteen feet. The flood was the subject of *Crisis at Pemberton Dike*, a book for junior readers. A watershed and large drains now prevent that sort of disaster.

Mayor Norm Rohm, whose family name is on early DeKalb County census lists, remarked, “Water can be found in some places in the city of Auburn just three feet below ground!”

That is also true. Auburn WAS built on a swamp, or what environmentalists today call “a wet land.” *The History of DeKalb County* states, “DeKalb County was once a tropical swamp. No one, not even the Indians, could live in the wet and bug-infested condition of 1800. DeKalb County emerged from the Ice Age as a low, wet, and poorly drained location.” The book also includes a section on the flora and fauna of the area.

Visitors also might like to know that about a century ago, Laurel Spindler, an area farmer, unearthed the skeleton of a mastodon in the muck. Don’t believe me? Andrew Carnegie acquired it for \$500, and the skeleton is on display at the Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh.

## 17. Aviation

Who would expect a little town like Auburn to have such a fine airport? Few people would believe it, but Auburn boasts a modern FAA accredited facility of more than 375 acres with runways 5000 feet long, routinely accommodating DC-3s. Generally the biggest planes that use the airport are the Gulf Streams. As one aviation expert put it, "If the weather were just right and the wind 30 knots, it would be possible, though not probable, to land a 727 here."





Auburn's aviation history is long, interesting, and worth investigating.

*Air Facts* magazine once reported that DeKalb County was "the most aviation minded and had more airplanes per capita during the 1930s and 1940s than any other county in the state. "

"Wild Bill Fitzsimmons," who not only watched Wilbur and Orville Wright give a demonstration in 1905, but helped them grease the two-hundred-foot wooden troughs along which their plane was catapulted (with the aid of a fifteen hundred pound weight dropped from a tower) became a colorful Auburn pioneer aviator, stunt flyer, and commercial pilot. With the help of B.O. Fink, Fitzsimmons purchased his own plane in 1926, and by 1930, he was teaching Irvin Rieke how to fly; later he taught Glenn Rieke.

So, as you can see, Auburn has had an airport since the 1920s when E. L. Cord built one for himself behind his home on land between County Road 427 and County Road 27. Cord owned the Stimsom Aircraft Company and later several aviation-related companies and enterprises, one of which became the forerunner of American Airlines. When he left Auburn in 1931, Cord sold his airport to the Auburn Automobile Company.

In 1939, Glenn Rieke purchased the airport and renamed it the Auburn Airport.

In 1963, the airport was relocated south of Auburn on County Road 60. The venture was substantial, and because the City of Auburn was involved, the airport was annexed to the city. DeKalb Airport, dedicated in 1964, was expanded again in the 1990s. The new building, dedicated in 1996, is named The Glenn Rieke Terminal, a tribute to Glenn and his wife, Thelma, and in honor of their family legacy.

Auburn's airport adds immeasurably to the life and industry of area businesses and is a significant resource and attraction.

## The Warbirds

The Hoosier Warbirds Club, a group of aviation enthusiasts, is another Auburn aviation treasure. This group, started by Niles Walton in the early 1990s, is dedicated to the preservation of vintage aircraft, especially World War II airplanes. The Warbirds are building a museum, a 15,000 square-foot hangar constructed on the southeast corner of the airport property, south of the main runway near the intersection of County Road 62 and 27. It is designed to have a restoration area and places where escort and pursuit planes and bombers can be maintained, showcased, "honored and housed."

Since the time Walton placed his ad in the local paper about starting such a group, membership has grown. At their meetings, the Warbirds have excellent speakers, and members stay busy with projects. Their mission is to honor and preserve battle-used planes as well as to collect historic accounts about the men and women who flew them.

From time to time the Warbirds hold "fly-ins," and DeKalb County residents are reminded of the county's aviation history—one intrinsically involving Ed Shenk's influence as an aviation mechanic and pilot and his airstrip in Garrett, and before him, the days of Art Smith, Fort Wayne's "Bird Boy," who thrilled Auburn crowds in 1910, with fancy loop-de-loops and stunt flying. On August 3, 1998, an important chapter of DeKalb County aviation came to an end when hundreds of people in Northeast Indiana paid homage to Ed Shenk's aviation achievements and friendship as they quietly witnessed the scattering of his ashes over his airstrip and the green countryside beyond.

## 18. The Kruse Auction Park

The Kruse Auction Park is located just off I-69 on County Road 11A. The complex has been described as "a high tech car auction palace." One steel-frame building, for instance, can hold as many as fifteen hundred cars. The building features two rotating stages and dozens of attractions.

Kruse International has a state-of-the-art computer system that allows the company to consign cars and to make transactions quickly. Every year, new records are set— numbers such as the \$42 million received for the sellout of William F. Harrah's collection, the \$1.4 million for Greta Garbo's 1933 *J. Victoria*, and \$13 million for the sale of Homer Fitterling's forty-year collection.

From humble beginnings in 1971, when the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival Committee asked the Kruse family to auction cars to benefit the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival and the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, the concept has flourished. In 1971, the auction was held in a vacant lot near the Auburn Dairy Queen with only eighty cars. But success was born when a crowd of twelve hundred people each paid a dollar to watch and participate. The event led the Kruse family to realize that they had ventured into a business with a future. The company continues to grow and prosper.

Today the Kruse Auction Park encompasses the current 380-acre complex and attracts car enthusiasts from all over the world. Kruse International's annual auction offers visitors an excellent opportunity to witness America's love affair with the automobile.

Crowds come each year, and many have to force themselves to leave the excitement of Auction Park to go downtown to see the parade of prestigious Auburns, Cords, and Duesenbergs. After the parade, many of those cars are then showcased at the Auction Park where they receive bids in the millions of dollars. Generally more than five thousand vintage, antique, and collector cars change hands.

In 1995, when Kruse International celebrated its Silver Anniversary, dignitaries of all political persuasions and positions came to offer congratulations.

The Kruse Auction Park also serves as a gathering place for political rallies where people like Senator Dick Lugar, former vice-president Dan Quayle, and Congressman C.J. Watts meet con-

stituents. Gospel-singing groups, Fourth-of-July fireworks, and bluegrass and country music events make the Kruse Auction Park zing with energy and verve.

Today the Kruse family holds auctions in more than forty-six states and five countries, but the one held in Auburn during Labor Day is the largest collector car show and auction in the world.

Naturally, therefore, the Kruse Auction significantly benefits the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum and the city of Auburn.





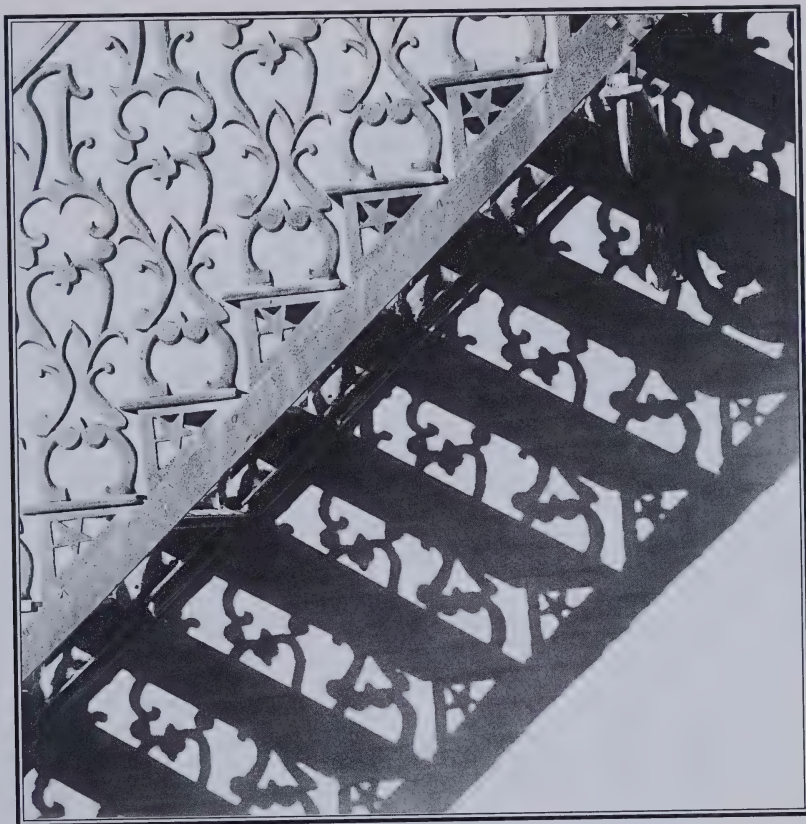
### *III. History People, Past and Present*



As a part of my survey, I asked respondents to mention the names of people who were especially visionary about some idea or project or who during a certain era gave Auburn a lasting gift of historic significance. My request stirred a great deal of conversation. It is impossible to designate any one person as representative of a specific decade, but the name or names listed give the history buff an opportunity to research more about the various individuals or families whose influences and legacies continue to benefit the town.

- 1830s- Wesley Park: Platted the city, promoted the area, and was the first sheriff. He helped establish the Methodist Church, which held meetings as early as 1837.
- 1840s- a. Egbert B. Mott: One of Auburn's first civic leaders. He served as postmaster and as treasurer of the village and the county library. He was the first lawyer to settle permanently in Auburn. From 1856 until 1859, he was county judge.  
 b. The Presbyterians: Established a church in 1844.
- 1850s- Thomas Ford owned the land east of Cedar Creek, site of the first DeKalb County Fair, "for which there was no money for premiums but some agricultural exhibitions." It was the forerunner of the DeKalb County Agricultural Society Fair, which continued until the Civil War. The Free Fall Exhibit and HomeComing developed into the present day fair.
- 1860s- The Schaab Brothers: Owners and operators of a prosperous mercantile business that stayed competitive and inventive until the 1970s. The brothers were instrumental in the formation of the Commercial Club.
- 1870s- William H. McIntosh: Prominent educator known as the town's "Civil War Sage" who became Superintendent of Schools. (In 1916, on his 79th birthday, he deeded his home and land(northeast corner of South Main and Fifteenth) to the city to be used for a school that was built in 1920 and used until 1997.
- 1880s- a.-W.H.Kiblinger: Established a hardware business, bought out the small buggy manufacturing business of I.N. Cool, and developed two large factories where carriages and automobiles were manufactured.  
 b.- The Catholics: Father August Young and the Ashley, Bueret, Girardot, Beugnot, Goodman, McIntyre, Hollinger, and Murphy families.
- 1890s- W.H.McIntyre: Banker who acquired the Kiblinger assets and developed automobiles, specifically the Kiblinger and the cycle car known as "The Imp." He started several businesses, including the first motorized source of public transportation in the county, the interurban between Garrett and Auburn.

- 1910s- Charles Eckhart: Founder of the Eckhart Carriage Company, gave the city a library in 1911, a fountain in 1912, the YMCA in 1914, and a park in 1915.
- 1920s- a. E.L.Cord: Entrepreneur who purchased the ailing Auburn Automobile Company, brought executives and designers to Auburn, and promoted classic cars.  
b. The Hickory Club(forerunner of the Auburn Rotary Club).
- 1930s- The Doctors: Dr. Bonnel Souder(a pioneer in the use of x-ray equipment) delivered babies and practiced with her father. Souder Hospital(founded in 1915) was the first in northeast Indiana to offer maternity care and have fully equipped surgical rooms. Dr. Sanders and Dr. A.V. Hines(of Sanders Hospital, 1007 South Main Street) worked with younger associates to establish DeKalb Memorial Hospital.
- 1940s- The Auburn RED DEVILS: The Auburn High School basketball team(Derrow, Wertenberger, McInturf, McComb, Webb, Beers, Kelly, and Miller, with manager Hugh Western), assistant coach Zeke Young and head coach Keith Showalter, galvanized the town as they advanced to play in the state's "Final Four."
- 1950s- B.O.Fink: Rebuilt the Auburn Foundry(a gray iron casting company founded in 1911) after it was completely destroyed by fire in 1951. It has since expanded into the world market.
- 1960s- The Mayors: H.Gerald Oren, Clarren L. Boger, and Don M. Allison led the town during the years when Auburn experienced growing pains. Interstate 69 turned West Seventh Street(State Road 8) from a country road into a strip. New industries came to town, DeKalb Memorial Hospital was built, and DeKalb Central High School, a new consolidated school, opened its doors.
- 1970s- a. John Martin Smith: Authored *DeKalb County History* and was instrumental in starting the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum and NATMUS. An area historian and preservationist, he spearheads the restoration of the old Auburn Electric Power building. During his tenure as state president, the Indiana Historical Society built a \$36 million dollar facility in Indianapolis.  
b. Dean Kruse: Developed the Kruse Car Auction concept(previously discussed).
- 1980s- Allan Graber: Realtor and developer, established ADICO, which brought business and energy to DeKalb County after a national recession, particularly severe in the Midwest.
- 1990s- Glenn and Thelma Rieke: Donated sixty-three acres to the city to be used for city parks. Rieke, head of a successful manufacturing industry (founded by his father in the 1920s), supported many city projects, served as chairman of the community campaign to build DeKalb Memorial Hospital, and owned and influenced the development and expansion of Auburn's present airport facilities.



#### *IV. Nearby Attractions*



Auburn is conveniently located on State Road 8, two miles east of Interstate 69. The city has excellent schools, a thriving economy, modern health and medical facilities, many good industries, and as the Chamber of Commerce brochure puts it, “an overall feeling of well-being.” In spite of such words, we who live here are realistic enough to know other towns and places can also make similar claims.

If you have time, you also may want to visit some nearby attractions. For instance, the historic covered bridge in Spencerville dating back to 1873, is the only one remaining of five covered bridges in DeKalb County and well worth seeing. [For a good history of the bridge, read the July, 1973, issue of the *Auburn Vanguard*.]





Other interesting attractions are:

1. Sechler's Pickles: St. Joe, Indiana. In this quiet old-fashioned-looking village there is a very much up-to-date company, classified as one of "Indiana's Seven Secret Treasures." Established in 1920 by Ralph Sechler, it is still run by the Sechler family. *The History of Sechler Pickles, 1921-1996* by Franklyn Sechler narrates how his father started and developed the company. It is great fun to tour Sechler's and taste the pickles, especially the "Sweet Heat" variety.



2. The Garrett Railroad Museum: From its earliest days, Garrett was a railroad town. Its history, therefore, is based on the people, events, and facts about the different trains that ran through its downtown. During the 1980s, a number of Garrett citizens, understanding the importance of railroading to their town's heritage, began a railroad museum in one of the old depot buildings. When I visited the Railroad Museum, I expected to see only one or two small displays. Not so. I was amazed. I think you will be too! An added delight about this little town is to learn about the history of the Creek Chub Bait Company that manufactured hand-carved fishing lures.

3. The Lincoln Museum: 200 East Berry Street, Fort Wayne. The Lincoln Museum attracts visitors and scholars from all parts of the globe because of its Lincoln memorabilia and research materials. The museum has eleven galleries, many hands-on exhibits, and four small theaters demonstrating film presentations. In October of 1995, the museum relocated to its present site. The "new" \$6 million Lincoln Museum building houses the world's largest private collection of Lincoln materials. Special events such as a Lincoln Gala Ball and the distinguished Spirit of Lincoln Award make the museum an exciting and important attraction.

Visitors will be overwhelmed by the thousands of photos, maps, prints, engravings, books, newspaper and magazine clippings and cartoons, and artifacts that document Lincoln's life. Also on display is a rare copy of the Declaration of Independence. The interactive displays and exhibits, the research library, and gift shop make the museum appealing to young and old. A favorite section of the permanent exhibit gallery is the delightful "Dear Mr. Lincoln" feature, which inspires children to consider modern-day issues. Lincoln National Life Insurance Company can be proud that its Lincoln Museum is considered a national treasure.

4. The Mid-America Windmill Museum: Located just off Allen Chapel Road east of Kendallville this museum showcases a veritable forest of historic, operating windmills. Opened in 1998, the century-old barn affiliated with the museum has handhewn, foot-thick beams, a theater room, gift shop, and a collection of resource books and materials about windmills and wind power. Some antique windmills under restoration are more than 120 years old.

5. Taylor Hall Fine Arts Gallery: The English and Humanities building at Tri-State University, Angola, features a handsome gallery of fine and rare 17th and 18th century paintings and engravings on its main floor. The collection is the result of the efforts and interest of English professor, Dr. Tom Tierney.

6. The Gene Stratton-Porter Historic Site: Located in Rome City, Indiana, the marshlands and streams about which Gene Stratton-Porter wrote in *A Girl of the Limberlost* are well worth the short drive from Auburn. Visitors will enjoy the natural settings and find the tour of the author's home an interesting experience.[For a good account of the novelist and naturalist read Chapter 3 in *From Ben Hur to Sister Carrie* by Auburn writer Barbara O. Morrow.]

7. Grabill and Shipshewana: These two towns are interesting because of their Mennonite/Amish heritages. Grabill is located about twenty miles southeast of Auburn between State Roads # 1 and # 37, whereas Shipshewana is on State Road 5, north of U.S. 20. Each has many small restaurants, taverns, and shops where people can browse and buy crafts. In September, the Grabill Fair draws people from all over northeast Indiana.

In existence since 1922, Shipshewana is "the king of the flea markets," and spreads over one hundred acres. It attracts 30,000 people a day and is home to more than a thousand vendors. Even celebrities—such as former president Jimmy Carter— enjoy making pilgrimages to Shipshewana to watch or take part in lively auctions held on a continuous basis from May until October.

8. Greater Fort Wayne Aviation Museum: This interesting display is a showcase of aviation in the tri-state area. It features military, commercial, and general aviation, occupies 6000 square feet of space in the Lt. Paul Baer terminal at the Fort Wayne International Airport, and includes hundreds of items of historic significance. Subject to security considerations, the museum is open to the public 365 days per year. Admission is free. Tours are available by appointment. Contact Curator, Roger K. Myers@serv2.fwi.com.



9. OTHER: Of course, Fort Wayne offers big city facilities, atmosphere, and attractions. Visitors can enjoy the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, the Civic Theater, First Presbyterian Theater, the Embassy, the Cinema Center, Arena Theater, Williams Theater, the Historic Fort, the botanical gardens, the old City Hall Historical Museum, Science Central, and the Philharmonic. For the sports minded, Fort Wayne has all sorts of athletic events and professional teams. Its several colleges and universities provide a vast array of opportunities. Nearby Warsaw offers theater-lovers outstanding "Wagon Wheel" productions, especially musicals, and Coldwater, Michigan, stages fine drama and entertainment at the historic Tibbits Opera House.





## V. *Hoosier Opinions*

Auburn's history is special; its citizens work and play hard; its government is responsible. The local economy supports an excellent work force, and charitable donations testify to a generous spirit.

The severe recession in the 1980s forced many industries, including International Harvester in Fort Wayne, to close or move, and the Midwest became known as "the rust bucket of America." That reference no longer applies. Today northeast Indiana boasts many new and diversified companies. Indiana is peaceful and prosperous— a good place to live.

But even in these times of technology and commerce, the Hoosier state reflects the era of James Whitcomb Riley. In the fall the frost is on the pumpkin, and in the spring Hoosier hysteria burns feverishly. During the rest of the year, people celebrate covered bridges, county fairs, and politics.

Given a chance, Hoosiers would rather sit and visit with family or talk about a basketball game than take off for parts unknown. During these conversations, a person will hear plenty of opinions.

Since I've always wanted to write a book or host a show and call it "Hoosier Opinions," I'll share a few reflections I've read or overheard while working on this project. They will give readers some insight about the attitudes, nature, and feelings of Hoosiers, the term given to people who live in Indiana.

1. Time: "You hate it when kids you taught are grandparents."  
(H. Stackhouse, Teacher/Author: *Reflections Series*)
2. Classic Cars: "I hope their luster never dims...."  
(D. C. Merchanthouse, Auburn Automobile Company/"Bard of Washington Street")
3. Visiting Auburn: "My brother-in-law, Piet de Weijer, and his wife spent considerable time touring the United States. They traveled to Seattle and Oregon, to Colorado and all across the south. They went to New York to visit the Guggenheim and take in the sights. They spent ten days with us in Auburn. Piet was amazed how diversified the industry is here compared to other towns this size and the number of companies with international markets, companies like Ramco, basically a Dutch company, Phillips, the Auburn Foundry, Cooper, Steel Dynamics, etc. Another thing he noticed is how friendly people are."  
(Arie Van Straten, Native of Holland, Auburn resident since 1957, Cabinet Designer)



4. Life: "It's a hoot."  
(J. Kempf, Columnist/ Author of *Jane's Friends and Family Cookbook*)
5. Antiquing, Browsing, and Auctions: "People go to auctions to look for antiques and bargains. Some look for junk. A person can be surprised. One time some people followed me all around an auction thinking I was an antique dealer. I'd bid on a couple of things for fun. When I was young, I had a Captain Midnight de-coder ring—you could send away and get things like that during the war years—. Now it's worth over a hundred dollars."  
(G. Mavis, Businessman)
6. Books: "Books invite our imagination, intelligence, and memory."  
(S. R. Sanders, I.U. Professor/ Author)
7. Art: "In the old days it was the wealthy patron who supported the artist. Fortunately that's changing. Today even the middle class supports the arts."  
(B. Baker, Fine Arts Painter)
8. Children: "God love 'em."  
(M. Smaltz, Elementary School Teacher)
9. Music: "Some of America's most outstanding popular music comes from Indiana, people such as Cole Porter and Hoagie Carmichael. Indiana University has one of the finest music schools in the country. There's also a tradition in the Hoosier state of producing outstanding marching bands."  
(M.V.Roberts, Pianist)
10. Place: "Indiana is a place of faith, family, and freedom."  
(D. Kruse, State Representative)
11. Work: "Today's young people have had so much given to them, most don't know what it's like to NEED to work—to do without."  
(G. McD. Siegler, Homemaker/ YMCA Swim Instructor)
12. Sports: "It's IU, Notre Dame, and Babe Ruth. That's the way it is for my stepson."  
(B. Klug, R.N.)
13. Looking Back: "I moved back to Auburn after having been away for nearly thirty years.... The most obvious changes are in the railroads. The old Vandalia tracks are completely torn out and the right of way is either covered with weeds or has been graded and planted to grass."  
(F. Link, Former Employee of Auburn Rubber Company/Author: *Looking Over the Shoulder*)
14. Politics: "I'll always vote."  
(C. Grandstaff, Businesswoman)
15. Writing: "As we become more global in our connections, the focus of our writing becomes more regional."  
(J. Powell, Executive Director, The Writers' Center)
16. Religion: "People are looking for truth and decency in their lives. They're hungry for God."  
(Rev. T. Younger, Pastor Emeritus, Lakewood)
17. Parenting: "We try to do the best we can to bring up our children the right way. Even when they're grown and on their own, we worry about them, but we can't live their lives for them. All we can do is give them our joy."  
(S. Rieke, Parent)

18. Church: "People care for and love their church as they care for their families."  
(B. Morrow, Author: *From Ben-Hur to Sister Carrie*)
19. The ACD Festival: "The history of the classic cars makes Auburn better known today than when the automobiles were manufactured here in the 20s and 30s."  
(D. Johnson, Chairman Emeritus, Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival)
20. Veterans: "We honor them."  
(D.Clark, Teacher)
21. Moving: "I could never move away. My family is here. Besides, I like the changing seasons."  
(D.S.Haywood, Dental Office Manager)
22. Friends: "Don't go too far and don't stay too long."  
(J. Wintrode, Mutual Fund Executive)
23. Christmas: "Imagine not putting up one little ribbon or some lights at Christmas!"  
(F. Webb, Physical Therapist)
24. Economy: "With SDI, the recent expansion at the Auburn Foundry, and other businesses planning expansions, along with low unemployment, we've got good indications of a pretty sound economy. We've been fortunate."  
(J. D. Haggarty, Third Generation Banker)
25. Loyalty: "People who go to Purdue are like family."  
(D. Allison, Businessman, Purdue Graduate)
26. Creativity: "Think about what you CAN do, not what you can't do. Make interpretations—what something IS; what it MEANS; what it COULD mean."  
(D. Goss, Teacher/Computer Graphics)
27. Identity: "We have a proud history, but we are always looking to the future."  
(J. Bartos, Database Analyst)
28. Neighborhoods: "People walk a lot in Auburn. It's safe to walk. That's one good thing about living in Auburn."  
(D. Payton, Plumber/Amateur Radio Enthusiast)
29. Baseball: "There's no sport better than baseball."  
(J. Sassanella, Professional Ball Player)
30. Light: "Each season has its own design."  
(S. Buttermore, Artist/Teacher)
31. Integrity: "Life is short, eternity long."  
(Dean Jewell, Retired Businessman)
32. People: "The people of the middle states are people of the land rather than of things."  
(T. Wise, Historian)

These comments reflect the politics and attitudes held by those who live in this small city. Most people here are conservative, devoted to their families and church, and fanatically loyal to their school teams. They value their jobs and have a good work ethic. Matters concerning patriotism, voting, and belief in country are issues about which they talk and argue.

People in Auburn are aware of the importance of books and the printed word. Recently the owner of Waanders' Bookmark remarked, "It's amazing how many authors and readers there are in this one small town."

The fine arts aren't as important as sports to many people, but others travel to Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, and Chicago to attend the theater or to visit art museums. Locally the DeKalb Community Concerts and the Auburn Arts Commission sponsor cultural events; area art shows are well attended, and children get involved in Young Authors programs, science fairs, and church productions. Teachers, especially in the elementary schools, are incredibly creative.

Sports and music are the two main outlets for young people. Area schools have outstanding marching bands, and the Auburn school showchoir regularly places first in competitions. Families schedule their lives around their children's extracurricular activities.

Talk with the people who live here. You will find them friendly, eager to share tidbits of history about this lively little city, and happy to suggest some mini-tours.

A golfer suggested eighteen holes at Greenhurst, a classic car owner believed nothing could be better than a car auction, an author listed the library and the bookstore, an artist insisted on seeing the Tri-Kappa Art Collection and visiting an artist's studio, an antique buff suggested Serendipity and another antique shop, an athlete talked about jogging through the parks, and a builder suggested various neighborhoods and housing developments, especially Hunter's Glenn, Auburn Hills, and Bridgewater. One harried shopper didn't want to tour anything but remarked that she was going to stop by the library. "I always take time to do that," she said.

I've lived in many places, including other countries. I don't pretend Auburn is the best small city in the world, but it is a good place to live. Most people here hope that future expansion and development won't cause Auburn to lose its small town appeal. It's a realistic concern.







**Rachel Roberts** is an Auburn writer whose work has appeared in regional and national publications such as *TRACES OF INDIANA & MIDWESTERN HISTORY*, *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*, and the *WALL STREET JOURNAL*. She is the author of *Crisis at Pemberton Dike* (1984), a book for junior readers. She has written two plays, and her poetry has appeared in literary publications. For fifteen years, Roberts wrote a column for the *THE EVENING STAR*.

**Robert Sbargo** has enjoyed being behind a camera since the age of four. He has worked professionally as a still photographer and cinematographer. His award-winning photography has been featured in publications, exhibits, and art shows. Among other recognitions for his photography, Sbargo received the Associate, Royal Photographic Society (Great Britain) designation.

One recent exhibit which received much attention was "Without Boundaries," a collection of forty-two black and white portraits of people from countries around the globe, including Africa, South America, eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Australia, Lapland, and India.

Sbargo currently resides in Auburn, Indiana, and serves as President of the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum.









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by  
**Rachel S. Roberts**

**FEATURING PHOTOGRAPHS**

by  
**Robert Scharge**

